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A book of boyhoods, by Ascott R. Hope

Ascott Robert Hope Moncrieff

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A BOOK OF BOYHOODS.

A BOOK OF BOYHOODS.



"PETER PARLEY."—(S. G. GOODRICH. 1793—1860).

See "A New England Boy."

Frontispiece.

A BOOK OF BOYHOODS.

BY

ASCOTT R. HOPE,

AUTHOR OF

"STORIES OF YOUNG ADVENTURERS," "STORIES OF WHITMINSTER,"

"STORIES OF LONG AGO," ETC., ETC.

"Samples from the growth
Of life's sweet season."

WORDSWORTH.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.



LONDON:

JOHN HOGG, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1882.

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P R E F A C E .



HIS book may serve as a companion to my "Stories of Young Adventurers," which last year met with considerable favour at the hands of the public. That volume, perhaps, had a fault common to most such collections, which, dealing with one kind of hero, are apt to become a little monotonous by including so many incidents of the same class, as they cannot but do, for all one's efforts to provide variety. I believe there are some boys who can never have too much of adventure stuffed into their reading; yet there must be others who appreciate features of less exciting interest. So it has occurred to me to put together a series of stories about all sorts of boys, who in different countries and circumstances, in peace or in war, at school or at work, at home or out in the world, by land or by sea, have gone through experiences worth relating, and have taken the trouble to relate them accordingly.

My aim has been to give an attractive and characteristic picture of these young lives, not a mere hasty compilation from or abridgment of the autobiographical sketches upon which, as in the previous volume, I have founded my stories, sometimes introducing passages from the heroes' own narratives, and sometimes supplementing them from other sources. This license of quotation will be found to vary in the different stories, some of which need much more *boiling down* than others, to answer my purpose. In the case of Charles Lamb, for instance, the greater part of the work has been stringing together passages from the writings of himself and other Blue Coat boys, through which I hope to entice certain light-minded readers, were it but for a moment, on to the fat pastures of standard literature as a change from those barren moors where they are more accustomed to nibble. But in treating the story of Kaspar Hauser it has seemed better not to quote from his account of himself, since I have to show that there are grave doubts as to how far we should believe him. I think I may take the credit of being the first to bring before the English public all the main facts about this most singular character ; such sketches of him as I have met with out of Germany appearing to be based upon partial information.

"One of the best things in the world is to be a boy ; it requires no experience, though it needs some practice to be a good one. The disadvantage of the position is that it does not last long enough ; it is soon over ; just as you get used to being a boy, you have to be something else, with a good deal

more work to do and not half so much fun." So says a certain American writer, and many of us grown-up folks may feel inclined to agree with him. I believe that the pictures of youth here presented will not be without interest for readers come to that time of life when

"As less the olden glow abides,
And less the chillier heart aspires,
With driftwood beached in past springtides,
We light our sullen fires."

Boys themselves have perhaps less admiration for boyhood, and are apt to look forward to making more of life when they have become men. Still, it is but natural also that they should like to read about other boys, and the gratification of such a taste, with the opportunity of offering by the way some few hints that may be useful to them, both now and afterwards, has been my main object in preparing this Book of Boyhoods.

A. R. H.





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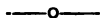
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The fire being ready, the first "exercise" of the morning would, in most cases, be family prayer with a chapter from the Bible. Then came breakfast, a hearty and plentiful meal; dinner, still more so, was at noon; tea and supper together came at sundown. Cider was the great drink; vegetables, pies, cakes, "apple sauce," and all the staple dainties of New England cookery would not be wanting at every meal, putting to shame the narrow routine of our English tables. Most decent people ate and sat in their kitchen, the centre of family life and heart of the household, so to speak. Servants, who would be as likely as not the children of friends and neighbours, were members of the family, sharing the meals of their employers, as the latter took part in whatever work was going on.

To be idle was the only shame among those honest folks. Distinctions of class among them, while not unknown, were but slightly marked. Yet the courteous formalities of last century had not been so much lost, as in our hurried and envious days. Travellers meeting on the highway saluted one another with a certain dignified politeness; respect for age and authority was strictly enforced by public opinion; and the school-children—as is still the case in some English parishes—were properly taught to "make their manners" to passing strangers. Such civilities did not then seem to Brother Jonathan a tax upon his freedom and independence.

"Everybody had time to be polite," recalls our author with regret; "now tall walking and tall talking are the vogue." Like other bygone ceremonies, the customary salutation "first subsided into a vulgar nod, half ashamed and half impudent, and then, like the pendulum of a dying clock, totally ceased." Many things have changed, both there and elsewhere, since these days, while time goes on as ever, turning the romantic seclusions of nature into crowded tourist-grounds, and "sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain," into a grimy manufacturing centre.

II.

BUT it is time to take up the thread of Peter Parley's story at the beginning of his school-days. A parish in these parts would not have been itself without either its meeting-house

London, stretching in a long line on the opposite side of the river, were extinguished one by one; a few remaining, however, as sentinels, indicating anxiety and watchfulness. The sounds on all sides were at last hushed, 'and left the world to darkness and to me.' More than half of my two-hours' watch had passed when I heard the dip of oars and the flapping of waves against the prow of a boat. I looked in the direction of the sounds, and at last descried the dusky outline of a small craft stealing down the river. I cried out: 'Boat ahoy! who goes there?' My voice echoed portentously in the silence, but no answer was given, and the low, black, raking apparition glided on its way. Again I challenged, but there was still no reply. On went the ghost! I cocked my gun. The click sounded ominously on the still night air. I began to consider the horror of shooting some fellow-being in the dark. I called a third time, and not without avail. The rudder was turned, the boat whirled on her heel, and a man came ashore. According to my orders I marshalled him to the guard-room, and gave notice of what had happened to the captain. The man was only a fisherman going home, but he was detained till morning. So, you see, I can boast that I made one prisoner. My watch was soon over; and returning to my station I laid down to sleep."

But the events of that night were not yet over, for the weary sentinel sank into repose only to be roused by a loud cry in the main barrack-room overhead. "Alarm! alarm!" was echoed by twenty voices, followed by quick shuffling sounds, and a hurried rush of footsteps down the staircase. The sentry in front let off his musket, and was answered by a long line of reports from the different posts extending up and down the river for half a dozen miles. "Then came the roll of drums and the mustering of the men. Several of our company had been out to see what was going on: they came back saying that the enemy was approaching. J. M—— distinctly heard the roar of cannon, and positively saw the flashes of muskets. B. W—— found out that the attack had already begun upon our southern pickets. Nobody doubted that our time had come.

"In a very few minutes our company was drawn up in line, and the roll was called. It was still dark, but the faint flashes gave us now and then a glimpse of one another's faces. I think we were a ghostly-looking set, but it was, perhaps, owing to the

blueish complexion of the light. J. S—— of West Hartford, who marched at my left shoulder—usually the lightest-hearted fellow in the company—whispered to me, ‘Goodrich, I’d give fifty dollars to be at West Division!’” For his own part, Goodrich felt rather serious, with “a certain anxious feeling in my stomach.” He encouraged himself by thinking of a letter from his father, exhorting him to patriotic courage, and only wished the suspense might be over.

The captain showed himself the right man in the right place. “All right, my good fellows; every man at his post!” he said, in a clear hearty tone, when the roll was finished. These few words took an inspiring effect, though they were not quite true, for one poor fellow was so disturbed in mind and body that he could by no means be brought out to face the foe. The rest of the company were ready to do their duty. But messengers who had been sent to the neighbouring posts came back with the report that the first alarm had proceeded from their own barracks. Inquiries were made, and the whole scare turned out to be the work of a corporal, who, in a fit of nightmare, had jumped up with the cry, “Alarm! alarm!”

This ludicrous *dénouement* was not wholly unsatisfactory, it appears, to certain of the warriors. Some who, before the supposed danger, had looked chapfallen enough, now became inflated with courage, loudly declaring the British to be a pack of sneaking cowards after all. Next morning when the fleet was seen lying, still and harmless, in the glassy bay, Mr. J. S—— no longer wished himself anywhere else, but boldly dashed his doubled fist into the palm of the other hand with such defiant exclamations, as “Come on here, you black-hearted British bull-dogs, and we’ll do your business for you!” etc.

So Peter Parley tells us with quiet humour. He appears to have no great opinion of soldiering, though his own remembrances of his first and last campaign are on the whole pleasant. A camp he noticed to be a bad place for anyone, and especially for young soldiers, whose idle time would be too often wasted, or worse than wasted. During the six weeks that his company remained under arms, he observed among these decent New Englanders a gradual wearing away of their sense of propriety under the influence of that reckless tone and those degrading amusements which are too commonly thought appropriate to military life. So he, for one, was heartily glad to get his dis-

missal from active service, even though he had had no opportunity of proving his valour; and with most of his countrymen, next year, he joyfully welcomed the news of peace. *Esto perpetua!*

Beginning the service of his country thus as a private militiaman, Samuel Goodrich rose in time to be a Senator, and Consul of the United States at Paris. But he is best known everywhere by his books for young people, to the writing of which he was incited by remembering the poverty of his own youth in this respect.

For a good many years, he says, he read nothing but the Bible and his school books, unless when some wet day he might turn over one of the imposing folios in his father's library, pleased by the large type, and reading whole pages aloud without in the least understanding what it all meant. At the age of ten, his father introduced him to "Goody Two-Shoes," the rhymes of Mother Goose, and other toy-books of the period, but he did not care about such foolish stories. Then a school-fellow lent him those nursery classics, "Red Riding-Hood," "Puss in Boots," "Blue Beard," "Jack the Giant-Killer," which excited little but fear and disgust, he declares, in his mind—he expected with horror to see a wolf peeping out of his own bedclothes! As he grew older, these productions of a barbarous age seemed to him mere lies, nonsense, and incitements to murder and robbery, and all his life he protested against them as evil communications which corrupt the natural good morals of youth. He was better pleased with "Robinson Crusoe," and with a tale of Madame de Genlis—who reads Madame de Genlis now?—which gave him his first glimpses into the marvels of Natural History and Natural Philosophy. But the first book which he read with enthusiasm, and which communicated to him a taste for reading, was Hannah More's "Moral Repository." A strange taste we may think for a boy, and for one who claims to have been imaginative! Did the copy-book headings not satisfy his idea of juvenile literature?

So when he became a man, he took in hand the task of reforming children's books, upon his early notions. He had no patience with "the old classics from Homer down to Mother Goose," which in his day had not risen to the allegorical dignity now attributed to them: nobody then thought of finding a solar myth in King Arthur, or a parable of the weather from these four and twenty blackbirds! Peter Parley would have

nothing but facts and useful information, for which he tried to tickle his young readers' interest by presenting them in lively stories with plenty of pictures, bringing the scenes and objects described before the quick eye as well as the slow mind of childhood. In this, though some old-fashioned folks have grumbled at him for trying to make knowledge too easy a matter—easy come by, easy go!—he must be confessed to have done good service to education; he was in books what Pestalozzi was in class-rooms. On the whole his theory is a good one, even if we are not going to give up our old fictitious favourites altogether for true tales about geography and history, and accounts of real animals who do not jump over the moon nor devour people's grandmothers.

Peter Parley, besides having a hand in others, wrote, compiled, or edited some hundred and twenty books of his own for young people—a number surpassed only perhaps by his own countryman, Jacob Abbott, and by the late Mr. W. H. G. Kingston—and these proved so successful, that English publishers were not ashamed to steal his assumed name, which in his life-time and afterwards has been often used to recommend similar works with which he had nothing to do. However we may estimate his literary merits, we must hail him as an earnest and laborious pioneer in the work of providing wholesome, useful, and entertaining reading for the young, a branch of literature which has grown vigorously since his day. How the original Peter Parley would open his eyes if, by the pale glimpses of the electric light, he could re-visit Paternoster Row about Christmas-time, and see the hundreds of volumes, in all their finery of binding, gilding and illustrations, which are annually published for the delight or edification of the rising generation! Happy are the youngsters so well provided for, is our first thought, though some of us will inquire doubtfully if the quality is equal to the quantity, and regret that in the rush of gay new-comers there should be so often shouldered into the background those good old standard books, whose merit was wont to be attested by less gilding and more thumb-marks. There is, perhaps, both good and evil in such profusion of juvenile literature, and whether praise or blame be given in the matter, this author must be admitted to have had no small hand in it.

If Samuel Goodrich did not approve of young people reading

idle tales as much as they often like to do, he was by no means a long-faced kill-joy grudging them mirth and amusement. He insists on it that they should be allowed to enjoy themselves as is their right and nature—now or never ! He loves them to be happy, not through petting, coddling, stuffing, or any form of foolish indulgence, but with that hearty hardy happiness of their own which is largely independent of cold winds and strict schoolmasters, and rough knocks and tumbles and such share of the burdens of life as can be fairly laid upon their young shoulders. All his stories have a moral bearing, and this may be taken as the moral of Peter Parley's own story.





A BRAVE BOY.

I.



JOHN SHIPP was a hero in the bud, to whom, at a very early age, soldiering proved as strong a loadstone as sailing is for many other English boys. With this for the ruling passion of his life, he began it just at the right time and in circumstances not unfavourable for the gratification of such propensities. He was born in 1795, at Saxmundham in Suffolk, and brought up in the workhouse, being an orphan, or as good as one, since his mother had died in his infancy and his father was a soldier abroad, nobody knew where. "Thus was I thrown on the world's tempestuous ocean, to buffet with the waves of care and to encounter the breakers of want."

At the age of nine, he had the sorrow of being deprived of his elder and only brother, pressed on board a man-of-war—a high-spirited lad, in whose case indeed, John thinks, but little pressing was necessary. From a parish boy to a powder-monkey in his Majesty's service might well appear promotion to him. None the less, the younger boy felt sad to find himself alone in the world, the rough world of a village poorhouse. But his buoyant spirits soon helped him over this trouble, and he addressed himself to what means of enjoyment were open to a bold and idle workhouse urchin, by giving as much trouble as possible to all who had to do with him. Many kicks and few halfpence were always likely to be the lot of such as he, and he seems to have laid himself out for earning and bearing his full

share of such charities. At this period he confesses that he was a wild little dog, who spent most of his time, as far as he can remember, in playing mischief and being duly punished for it, thus betimes unconsciously inuring his young skin to such hard blows as he was to court so freely at the hands of fortune, till his fancies became all at once diverted from childish tricks and frolics and turned into the channel in which they were to flow henceforth with irresistible force.

"One autumn morning, in the year 1797, while I was playing marbles in a lane called Love Lane, and was in the very act of having a shot at the whole ring with my blood-alley, the shrill notes of a fife, and the hollow sound of a distant drum, struck on my active ear. I stopped my shot, bagged my marbles, and scampered off to see the soldiers. On arriving at the market-place, I found them to be a recruiting-party of the Royal Artillery, who had already enlisted several likely-looking fellows. The pretty little well-dressed fifer was the principal object of my notice. His finery and shrill music were of themselves sufficient attractions to my youthful fancy: but what occupied my thoughts more than either of these, was the size of this musical warrior, whose height very little exceeded that of the drum by which he stood. 'Surely,' thought I to myself, sidling up to him, 'I must be myself as tall, if not taller, than this little blade; and should make as good a soldier!'

"Reflections of this nature were crowding thick into my mind, when the portly sergeant, addressing his words to the gaping rustics by whom he was surrounded, but directing his eyes to the bedroom windows in the vicinity of his station, commenced a right royal speech. I swallowed every word spoken by the royal sergeant with as much avidity as the drum-major's wife would her morning libation. It was all about 'gentlemen soldiers'—'merry life'—'muskets rattling'—'cannons roaring'—'drums beating'—'colours flying'—'regiments charging'—and shouts of 'Victory! victory!' On hearing these last words, the rustic bumpkins who had enlisted exposed their flowing locks, and with their tattered hats gave three cheers to 'the King—God bless him!' In this I most heartily joined, to the no small amusement of the assembled multitude. 'Victory' seemed still to ring in my ears, and the sound inspired my little heart with such enthusiasm, that it was not until some minutes after the rest had left off cheering, that

I became conscious, from the merriment around me, that I still held my tiny hat elevated in the air, waiting for a repetition of that spirit-stirring word. Finding myself observed, I adjusted my hat with a knowing air, elevated my beardless chin with as much consequence as I could assume, and, raising myself on tip-toe to appear as tall as possible, I strutted up to the sergeant, and asked him, in plain words, if he would 'take I for a sodger?' The sergeant smiled, and patted my head in so condescending a manner, that I thought I might venture to take the same liberty with the head of the drum; but in this I was mistaken, for I had no sooner touched it than I received from the drummer a pretty sharp rap on the knuckles for my presumption: his drum-head was as sacred to him as the apple of his eye. I again mounted on tip-toe and urged my question, 'Will you like I for a sodger?' intimating, at the same time, that I was 'bigger than that there chap,' pointing to the little fifer. Incensed at this indignity, the boy of notes was so nettled, that he commenced forthwith to impress on my face and head striking marks of his irritation in being thus degradingly referred to. This I felt that I could have returned with compound interest; but, as my antagonist had the honour of wearing his Majesty's livery, I deemed it wiser to pocket the affront with my marbles, and make the best of my way off. I accordingly made a retrograde movement towards home, full of the scene I had just witnessed, and vociferating as I went along: 'Left, right!' 'Right, left!' 'Heads up, soldiers!' 'Eyes right!' 'Eyes left!' etc."

In short, this twelve-year-old scapegrace had caught the *scarlet fever*, and from that day, he tells us, could say or do nothing but in what he understood to be a soldier-like style; even his play took chiefly the form of evolutions and manœuvres, and his conversation was embellished with such military phrases as he could pick up and apply more or less appropriately to the incidents of boyish life.

But the Guardians, those all-powerful arbiters of a parish boy's destiny, had proposed a more peaceful and prosaic career for him, and shortly after this adventure he was placed out with a farmer, "the most inhuman man I ever saw," all the less likely to wean the boy from his martial affections. The mistress, indeed, was kind as a second mother, often interfering to screen him from her husband's anger; but hardly a day passed without

his getting an unmerciful thrashing from this hard master, some of which severity, he admits, was not undeserved. He found farm-work by no means congenial to the "noble rage," which increased the more within him the more it was repressed. When he ought to have been handling pitchfork and pig-wash, he amused himself by trying to make all the cats and dogs about the place go through their drill; the very geese and turkeys, by the help of an ardent imagination, had to do duty as soldiers, and the hoes and rakes as muskets; while, in plain earnest, the master's whip was never long wanting to play the part of another military implement of great repute in these days. Even the old women of the parish could not pass our juvenile fire-eater without a military salute, such as, "Heads up, missis!" "Eyes right, missis!" "Keep the step, missis!" and so forth, much to the indignation of these peaceable goodies. When it was impossible for him to be engaged on more active service, he kept up his character by whistling such tunes as "God save the King!" "The British Grenadiers," or "See the Conquering Hero Comes!" The first of these patriotic melodies he once struck up in the churchyard during a funeral service, for which he got the sexton's cane over his back, "that being no place," as the outraged official justly remarked, "to show his loyalty in."

Naturally John's peculiar amusements often brought him into disgrace and trouble; generally, in fact, ending by the application of his master's whip, but nothing could eradicate the boy's propensity for soldiering, and as soon as the tyrant's back was turned, he would be at his military exercises again, or drying his tears to some inspiring air which he had caught up from the fifes and drums. Flogging only hardened him and stimulated his wish to desert from such a hateful situation; so when an opportunity came, he surrendered at once to the temptation of running away. Of this, his first expedition, let us have his own lively account, in which, perhaps, we may make allowance here and there for a little license of imagination.

"In the dreary month of December, when the white snow danced along the glen, and the icicle sparkled on the hoary oak, I had transported my frozen limbs into a turnip-field, close by the Gréat Yarmouth Road, where I stood shrivelled up like a dried mushroom, plotting and planning how to escape from the truly wretched situation in which I felt myself to be then placed.

I had just put my cold fingers into my mouth for the purpose of warming them, and had given them the first puff, when I heard the distant sound of martial music. Down went my hands, and up went my heels. I made an echelon movement towards the place, jumped over the gate, brought up my right shoulder a little, then gave the word 'Forward,' and marched in double-quick time. The music soon got nearer, or, at all events, I soon got so near to the music that I was glad to halt. Just at this moment the whole band struck up, 'Over the Hills and Far Away,' which kindled a flame in my bosom which nothing but death can extinguish, though I have now long since had my full share of the reality of the Scotch melody.

"On coming up to the party of soldiers I gave the colonel a military salute, by first slapping my leathers, then bringing up my right hand (which, by-the-bye, was the *wrong* hand) to my forehead, and extending the thumb as far as I could from my fingers. I continued in this position, keeping my elbow parallel with the top of my head, until the colonel came close up to me, and, remarking how studiously I retained the same position, condescendingly said, with a smile, 'That's a fine fellow.' On this head I perfectly agreed with the gallant commandant, as may be readily supposed; and the compliment so elated me, that I felt by no means certain whether I stood on my head or my heels, but ran about, first in the front, then in the rear, until at last I ran bump up against—'master,' who presented himself to my astonished eyes, mounted on Corporal Dash (a horse of his I had so named), with a long hunting-whip (a very old friend of mine) in his hand. The moment I recognised these old acquaintances, I saw that I had not a minute to lose; so, making up my mind that a good retreat was far better than a bad fight, I ran off at full charge, as fast as my legs would carry me, my master riding after me, and roaring out must lustily, 'Stop! stop!' If, instead of 'Stop,' he had said 'Halt,' it is more than probable that my legs would instinctively have obeyed; for, from the constant drills to which they had been subjected, they began to move quite mechanically. As it was, however, on I went, until a stile brought my master up, when, as I was quite out of breath, I thought I might as well halt too. Here I had the satisfaction of hearing my master swear roundly, that he would kill me when he caught me. 'Thank God,' thought I to myself, 'you have not got me yet.' The moment my per-

secutor rode on, I cut across a field, and again gained the head of the corps of Royal Horse Artillery, who were at this time just entering the suburbs of the village. Here I dared not venture to follow them any farther, until my master's hurricane had blown over; so I mounted a gate, where my heart yearned after them as that of a wounded soldier does after his corps in the battle's heat.

"Here I again set my wits to work how to elude the chastisement I was sure to receive from the infuriated man of clods. The regiment which I had seen was, I had ascertained, on its march to Yarmouth, to embark for foreign service; and, from the condescending manner of the colonel (who returned my salute), I made no doubt whatever that he would be glad to take me for a soldier. Full of these thoughts, I loitered about all day, but dared not venture in, until at length my *interior* began to express wants respecting which I had not before reflected. These demands were of a nature not to be drilled into obedience; so at last, overcome by fatigue and inanition, in I marched, having first seen my master march out. My mistress, who was ever ready to act the part of a kind mother towards me, soon provided me with a substantial meal. I was not long in doing justice to the repast thus kindly set before me; and, having effectually satisfied my appetite for the time present, I took the precaution of lining my pockets with a large hunch of bread and cheese, to subsist on the following day, when I intended to be in light marching order to follow the soldiers.

"Having thus prudently provided in some degree for the future, I betook myself to my usual occupations; but I had not commenced work more than five minutes, when I espied my master reconnoitring me from behind a hedge. Presently he crossed a stile with a large whip in his hand, and I could discern, from his artful movements, that it was his intention to come upon me unperceived. Now and then, in order that my fears might not be excited, he would stoop down and pull a turnip; but I was too good a soldier myself to be out-generalled in this manner. I stood from my work, the better to observe the enemy's movements, and kept my eye upon the fugleman. At last I saw him make preparations to arrange his whip; so I immediately arranged my legs for a start. 'Every step that he now takes,' thought I to myself, 'is a step nearer to my back; whereas, now that I have ten yards' start, there is still a chance

for me.' My master perceived that I was ready for a bolt, and soon broke from slow time into quick, and from quick to double quick, which put me to the charge, my master following me—swearing, threatening, and roaring out, 'Stop him—stop him!' a second time. I turned round to look who was likely to stop me, when my foot came in contact with a large clod, and I tumbled, heels over head. Here the chase ended, for my tyrant caught hold of me by a smock-frock which I had on, and commenced flogging me; but, from the race I had given him, I found he was so winded that he had not strength left to hurt me much; so I showed fight at once by seizing hold of the lash of the whip. This so enraged him, that he threw me from him with such violence that one side of the smock-frock and I parted company, and I had just sufficient time left me to get up again and make my escape, which I did, leaving my master, as a token of my unalterable affection, the one side of my upper garment. Let it be his winding-sheet, for he was a cruel monster!

"The remaining half of my smock-frock I stuck in a hedge in the same field, as a further token of my regard, and as a proof of my anxiety to leave him all I could spare. I then made a movement towards the town, in the hope that I should see the colonel, but he was not to be found; and I went from public-house to public-house in search of the soldiers, till night began to don her sombre mantle, which was as gloomy as my poor little friendless bosom. Go home I dared not; so after wandering about the farmer's house, I at last got into the stable, and slept all night in the hay-loft, dreaming I was a general, and riding over the battle's plain. Here I slept as sound as a dead soldier, until I was awoke in the morning by the gruff voice of my master, inquiring if they had seen anything of me, and protesting that, whenever he caught me, he would skin me alive. 'Bob' (one of his men), he bellowed out, 'saddle that there old horse, Corporal Dash, and I'll go and see where he is; and, if I catches him, I'll put him in the stocks, and see if that can't cool his courage for him. He is the most tarnationest and outdationest lad I have ever seen; it was only the day before yesterday that I caught him riding the old sow, Polly, with a pitchfork, and singing out, "Victory; victory!" but I'll see if the stocks won't cool him.' The old Corporal was saddled accordingly, and led out. I could distinctly see him through a small

hole in the loft, and he trotted off towards the market-place. I now began to think what place was best and safest for me. Skinning alive I could not bear the thoughts of; and as to the stocks, it is true they might have cooled me, for it was freezing hard, and as bitter a morning as ever blew from the heavens; but there was nothing soldier-like in the situation, and the thoughts of such a position were not to be endured.

"As soon as Bob had left the place to go to his work, I began to form plans for my retreat. Resolved, for the present, to act on the defensive, I first reconnoitred the course, to see that the enemy was not lying in ambush for me, or lurking in the vicinity of my hiding-place. Finding all clear, I descended to the stable, and soon gained the road. Having passed through the barnyard and orchard, I peeped in at the farmhouse, but could not catch a glimpse of my kind mistress. My bread and cheese I had eaten the preceding evening, and my stomach began now to evince symptoms of mutinous commotion; but the fear of falling again into the hands of my merciless enemy prevailed over all other considerations, and, in an adjoining field, I regaled myself very contentedly on a turnip. I had just concluded that sumptuous repast, and was beginning to reflect seriously on the situation in which I had placed myself, when the band struck up that beautiful old melody, 'The Girl I left behind Me.' This was both meat and drink to me, and its sweet notes comforted my before-inconsolable bowels. I put myself in marching and soldier-like attitude; and with my hands stuck close to my leathers, my fingers directed towards the earth, chin elevated, toes pointed, thus I stepped off with the left leg, keeping time with the tune, until I arrived at the toll-gate, about a quarter of a mile from the town.

"Here I could not help halting, to look back on the little place of my birth, the scene of my boyhood and of many a sportive hour. I found the tear trickling down my cheek. It was near the grave of my fond mother, too. I hesitated for some time, whether to proceed or return; but my master's dreadful threat rushed upon my mind in all its terror, and this impelled me onwards; and I again joined the followers, men and boys, girls and dogs. I was but a child, but I was a child cast upon the world, parentless, and in the hands of a cruel master. I could not believe it possible to be worse off, and therefore continued my march towards Yarmouth, without a

mouthful of bread to eat, or a penny in my pocket. I knew not a soul in the place to which I was going; but my truant disposition took a hop, step, and jump over all difficulties.

"My worldly effects consisted of a hat, which had once been round, but which, from my continually turning and twisting it into the shape of cocked-hats, road-hats, soldiers' caps, etc., was now any shape you wished; a little fustian jacket, waistcoat of the same material, a coarse shirt, which, from a violent shaking fit, was completely in rags; a pair of leathers, intolerably fat and greasy; ribbed worsted stockings, and a thwacking pair of high-lows, nailed from heel to toe. These, with a little stick, were my only encumbrances, save a gloomy prospect. I was bitterly hungry and sadly tired; but on I went, until we arrived within a mile of Beccles, some sixteen miles from home. Here some of the soldiers branched off to their quarters in the vicinity of the town; but I followed the greater body, as the more probable means of getting something to eat. The band now again struck up 'Over the Hills and Far Away.' I marched at the head, but began to find that my poor craving stomach could no longer feed upon delicious melody; so I now made up my mind to accost the colonel, and ask him if he could not enlist me for a soldier. The colonel seemed a kind-hearted man; so, as modesty on my part was now quite out of the question, I bent my way to the head inn, where all the officers were assembled.

"I inquired for the colonel, and was at last shown into a room where he was sitting, with other officers, at breakfast. I strutted up to him with my hat in my hand, and made him a most obsequious bow, with my hand and foot at the same time. I then stood straight, as if I had swallowed a sergeant's pike; when the colonel laughingly said, 'Well, my fine little rustic, what's your pleasure?' I said, making another bow, and scraping the carpet with my nailed high-lows, 'Soldiering, your honour.' At this, the whole of the officers burst into a roar of laughter, in which the colonel most heartily joined. I thought it was the fashion in the army, so I joined them, which only served to increase their mirth, and many of them were obliged to hold their sides from excess of laughter. I soon found that all this merriment was at my expense, at which I began to evince some slight displeasure, and was just about to express it in words, when the colonel said, in the most affectionate manner: 'My dear little child, you had better return to your

fond mother's lap.' Here I could not help piping, and I replied : 'Sir, my mother is dead.'—'Could I even take you,' continued the colonel, 'I should imagine that I was robbing some fond parent of its child ; besides, we are proceeding on foreign service, against the enemy.' This news only served to increase my anxiety to go, and I again entreated him to look with compassion upon an orphan. I saw him turn from me and wipe away a falling tear ; and then, addressing me with the affection of a parent, he said : 'My dear little fellow, if I was going to remain in England, I would take you ; but, under the present circumstances, I cannot.' Here I again began to cry, and I told him that I was sixteen miles from home, and had not got a piece of bread to put in my mouth. Upon this, the whole of the officers vociferated : 'Waiter, waiter, waiter !' The waiter was speedily in attendance, when I was ordered breakfast by twenty persons at the same time.

"I was still resolved not to give up my point ; but the colonel again told me it would be impossible for him to take me, but assured me that I should be taken care of, and desired me to go downstairs and get my breakfast. I did so, and, in passing round the table for the purpose of retiring, some gave me a shilling, some sixpence, so that I had more money than I had ever before possessed in my life. I ate a hearty breakfast in the kitchen, the servants asking me a number of impertinent questions. After breakfast I counted my riches, and found that I had ten shillings, at least, in my leathers, into the pockets of which I every moment introduced my hand, to feel if all was safe. In the afternoon I was ordered dinner, and at last placed in the charge of a sergeant, who inquired who and what I was. I slept with him, and slept most soundly too, thinking I was a soldier. Early the next morning I was awoke, when the sergeant showed me a note from the good-natured colonel to my master, whose name and address he had pumped me out of the evening before. The sergeant was proceeding to Woodbridge Barracks, and he had directions to take me over to my master, as well as to deliver the colonel's note, which was open, and contained a most earnest request that, for his sake, my master would not flog me. The generous colonel had also given the sergeant five shillings for me, which he gave me before I started from Beccles.

"About three o'clock in the afternoon I arrived at my

master's, who was at home. The kind message of the colonel was communicated to him, and he faithfully promised the sergeant that all should be forgiven and forgotten. I was lured, under this promise, to return to my work, resolved to do better in future; and I began to think that I really had not much reason to complain, for, on counting my money, I found I had fifteen shillings and sixpence left, after treating the sergeant on the way home. Scarcely, however, had the sun risen on the following day, when my master seized me by the neck, and dragged my clothes off my back. He had with him a double-handed whip, such as is used by colliers, and with this he lashed me so unmercifully, that I have no hesitation in saying that, had not a man, who was labouring in an adjoining field, interfered, he would have killed me."

So ended our hero's first sally, not more fortunately than Don Quixote's; but as little as the Knight of La Mancha was he to be reasoned or beaten out of the search for warlike adventures.

II.

AFTER all, a lad of John Shipp's turn of mind need want nothing but a few inches to put him in the way of following it, since the bellicose activity of the young French Republic was now causing a brisk demand for soldiers in every European labour market. With health and height there could be no fear of his not having his wish in time, and already our Government was arranging to meet it. As an experiment, three regiments had been formed of boys between the age of ten and sixteen, who were to be taken off the willing hands of parish authorities, and apprenticed thus to the trade of soldiering.

So one day, as our aspirant for fame was working in the fields, he saw a parish officer making towards him with a large official document in his hand. John's first thought was one of uneasiness: for what mischief was he about to be called to account? But the man in office accosted him with a smile, spoke of his known desire to enlist, read over to him the regulation for forming these juvenile corps, and announced that the parish would rig him out decently and send him to the dépôt at Colchester, if he would go. "Will I go?" re-

peated the boy, with his little heart in his mouth. With what joy did he not close with such a welcome offer !

Down went his shovel on the spot, and off he marched with his head in the air, whistling a martial tune. "By four o'clock of the same day, to the honour and praise of the parish be it spoken, I was rigged out in my new leather tights, new coat, new hat, new shoes, new everything—of which I was not a little proud"—though this proved a piece of useless extravagance on the part of the parish, as, when he joined the *dépôt*, the new suit had at once to be abandoned in favour of his Majesty's livery. Mounting a cockade or coloured ribbon in his hat, he went about the village, swelling like a young turkey-cock, to take leave of his playfellows and acquaintances, even of his cruel master, whom at such a moment he could afford to forgive. Early next morning, under the charge of that parish officer, he found himself seated on the front seat of the coach for Colchester, where, he declares, he would not have exchanged places with the Grand Pasha of Egypt, or the King of England himself.

Yet when he came to take his last look at Saxmundham, and the little spire that marked the resting-place of his poor mother, he stopped whistling the National Anthem, and felt a natural pang at leaving the scene of all his childish joys and sorrows. Some fellow-passengers on the coach, observing his dejection, cheered him up by talking of the prospects before him, and this notice from strangers so much enlivened the boy that he was soon chatting as freely as any of them, feeling himself no small personage as an embryo defender of Britain. On reaching Colchester, he had dinner at an inn, a remarkable experience of life to the parish nursling, then he was conducted to the colonel of his corps, and handed on from the colonel to the adjutant, from the adjutant to the sergeant-major, from the sergeant-major to the drum-major, and from him to his wife, a drunken old Irishwoman. In her motherly charge he was left by his only friend, the parish officer, giving him good-bye with a hearty shake of the hand, and wishing him every happiness.

"I must confess I felt now quite deserted ; about twenty boys gathered round me, and I soon found that my fine leathers were the subject of their ridicule and laughter ; some of them crying out, ' Bill, twig his leathers ! ' ' Smoke his new coat ! '

'My eye, what a buck!' 'Some gemman's son, I suppose, run away from his daddy!' 'Never mind,' said another, 'we'll soon drill his leathers into hot rolls and butter.' Here my friend Maggy, the Irishwoman, interposed her aid in my behalf. 'Arrah!' said she, 'what are you gazing at, you set of spalpeens, you? Be off, you set of thaves, or I will be after breaking some of your nasty dirty mugs for you. Arrah! don't mind them; sure they are nothing at all but a set of monkeys just caught. Come here, honey, and let me see who will be after laying a finger on you.' Here she seated me by her side, rubbed my chin, patted my back, eyed my coat and breeches, and asked me if I had got any pence in my pocket, with which she should get me some hot rolls and butter for 'tay.' I gave her a shilling, and she brought two rolls and butter. The residue I suppose she spent in gin, for she began to give me some of her Irish hugs; so much so, that I wished myself at a greater distance. One of the boys cried out, 'Ask for the change—ask her for the change, or she will do you.' At this imputation Maggy got on her legs, and, seizing a large trencher, tottered, or rather staggered, towards the boy, and exclaimed: 'You great big black-guard, you, do you want to rob me of my name? Take that, and bad luck to you!' Here she hurled the trencher at him; but the effort carried old Maggy off her legs, and she exhibited her gigantic figure on the floor, to the amusement of all the barrack. I could not help laughing heartily, though I found I had got among a queer set; when, the drum-major entering, and seeing his wife on the floor, vociferated: 'Get up, you old drunken hag; or, by St. Patrick!—and that's no small oath—but I'll pay you off.' Here Maggy made an effort to rise, but the drop had done her up; and I was obliged to give her a helping hand, and she was put to bed, clothes and all.

"On the following morning I was taken to a barber's, and deprived of my curly brown locks. My hair curled beautifully, but in a minute my poor little head was nearly bald, except a small patch behind, which was reserved for a future operation. I was then paraded to the tailor's shop, and deprived of my new clothes—coat, leathers, and hat—for which I received, in exchange, red jacket, red waistcoat, red pantaloons, and red foraging-cap. The change, or metamorphosis, was so complete, that I could hardly imagine it to be the same dapper little fellow. I was exceedingly tall for a boy of ten years of age;

but, notwithstanding this, my clothes were much too large : my sleeves were two or three inches over my hands, or rather longer than my fingers ; and the whole hung on me, to use a well-known expression, like a purser's shirt on a handspike. My pride was humbled—my spirits drooped—and I followed the drum-major, hanging my head like a felon going to the place of execution. I cut such a queer figure, that all who met me turned round and stared at me. At last I mustered up courage enough to ask one little chap what he was staring at, when he replied : ' Ask my eye, Johnny Raw ! ' at the same time adding his extended fingers and thumb to the length of his nose. Passing some drummers on their way to practice, I got finely roasted. ' Twig the raw-skin ! ' ' Smoke his pantaloons ! ' ' Them there trousers is what I calls a knowing cut ! ' ' Look at the sign of the Redman ! ' etc. Under this kind of file-firing I reached my barrack, where I was doomed to undergo the same routine of quizzing, till at length I got nettled, and told one of the boys, if he did not let me alone, I should take the liberty of giving him a good thrashing. This ' pluck,' as they termed it, silenced most of my tormentors, and I was permitted, for a time, to remain unmolested. In this interval the drum-major went out, having first put my leathers, etc., into his box, of which he took the key. I sat myself down on a stool, which might not inaptly have been styled the stool of repentance ; for here I began first to think that soldiering did not possess quite so much delight as I had pictured to myself. Still I resolved to put a good face on the matter, and so mixed with my comrades, and in an hour was as free and as much at home with them all as if I had known them for years."

In the course of the day, he made himself still more at home by fighting another boy who had called him names and tried to pull his nose. This would-be bully gave in after half a dozen rounds, and John's new comrades duly perceived that he was not a person to be trifled with. The good understanding between them was further cemented by the young recruit standing treat of hot rolls and butter all round, when he received the proceeds of his parish suit from the drum-major, who was, however, suspected of having kept back a handsome commission on the transaction for himself. Even his late antagonist partook of this luxury, under the genial influence of which he shook hands, frankly admitted he had been beaten,

and promised John the favour some day of another set-to, all in friendship.

"After this I went into town to purchase a few requisites, such as a powder-bag, puff, soap, candles, grease, etc. ; and, having procured what I stood in need of, I returned to my barrack, where I underwent the operation of having my hair tied for the first time, to the no small amusement of all the boys assembled. A large piece of candle-grease was applied, first to the sides of my head, then to the hind long hair ; after this, the same kind of operation was performed with nasty stinking soap ; sometimes the man who was dressing me applying his knuckles, instead of the soap, to the delight of the surrounding boys, who were bursting their sides with laughter, to see the tears roll down my cheeks. When this operation was over, I had to go through one of a more serious nature. A large pad, or bag filled with sand, was poked into the back of my head, round which the hair was gathered tight, and the whole tied round with a leather thong. When I was dressed for parade, I could scarcely get my eyelids to perform their office ; the skin of my eyes and face were drawn so tight by the plug that was stuck in the back of my head, that I could not possibly shut my eyes ; add to this, an enormous high stock was poked under my chin, so that altogether I felt as stiff as if I had swallowed a ramrod, or a sergeant's halberd. Shortly after I was thus equipped, dinner was served ; but my poor jaws refused to act on the offensive, and when I made an attempt to eat, my pad behind went up and down like a sledge-hammer.

"In the evening I went to parade, and was inspected by the colonel, who said I was a promising lad, but that my clothes did not fit, which he ordered to be altered. At this moment the master of the band came up to the colonel, and said that he should like to have me in the band, to learn the flute and to beat the triangles. This request was granted, and I was the following day removed to the band-room, and commenced my musical avocations, and in six months I had beaten the sides of the triangles nearly as thin as my own, and had also become a tolerable flute-player ; but, as at that time we got several volunteers from the militia, among whom were two excellent flute-players, I was removed back to the drummer's room and put to the fife. In a short time I was made fife-major—no small office, I assure you. I wore two stripes and a tremendous long

sash, which almost touched the ground. As the reader may suppose, I was not a little proud of my new office ; I began to ride the high horse among my old comrades, and to show my authority by enforcing obedience by very powerful arguments, for I was permitted to carry a small cane, and to use it too. In the absence of the drum-major, which was frequent, I carried the silver-headed stick, some seven feet long, and when we furnished the band for general guard-mounting, I astonished the spectators with my double demi-semi twist of my cane, and began to think myself one of the brightest of the bright."

Having thus rapidly obtained promotion, our hero did not neglect to bear himself with due regard to his importance. As fife-major he had his plain red coat exchanged for a splendid white silver-laced jacket and silver epaulettes, in which he swaggered about the town with a little cane under his arm, looking as if the world could not do without him. Twice a day the regiment beat through the streets of Colchester, the band attended by an admiring train of youngsters ; then, he says, some of the girls would keep begging him to play favourite tunes of theirs, entreaties urged with such fascinating smiles and leers that the impudent little monkey of a fife-major "occasionally vouchsafed to comply, always, however, keeping up his dignity by making a compliance with such requests appear a great condescension."

John was now happy and contented. He became a favourite with his officers. He shot up vigorously on the Government rations, growing very tall for his age, though somewhat too much like a whipping-post, which may be the explanation of his rapid elevation in rank. Yet all his new sense of importance could not keep down his old inclination for tricks and mischief which often led him into trouble. He was in the habit, it appears, of diverting himself with such frolics as filling the pipes of his comrades with gunpowder—what business, indeed, had they to be smoking at their age ?—putting a lighted candle in their hands while asleep, then tickling their noses with a straw ; or tying their great toes together, then calling out fire ; blacking their hands with soot, then tickling their ears and noses to make them scratch themselves and thus black their faces all over ; putting lighted paper between their toes while asleep ; pulling stools from behind them while in the act of sitting down ; sewing their shirts to their bedding,

and so on, a nice catalogue of the courtesies of barrack life. These mischievous doings led him into many a fight and other trouble, and of course he did not escape without a fair share of tricks in return.

One day, for instance, as he was sitting upstairs, he heard bawled out by a hundred voices : " Pass the word for the fife-major ; the adjutant wants him." As in duty bound, John bounced up and hurried out without an instant's delay, to be received by a roar of laughter from the whole barrack-yard, for to the tail of his fine jacket was pinned a large sheet of paper, proclaiming him to be the biter bit. Your jokers seldom love being served with their own sauce. There was nothing for it, however, but to dissemble his vexation at this First of April prank, so, with as good a grace as possible, he joined in the laugh at his own expense, and pretended to think it a very fine joke.

But about this time a more serious misfortune happened to him, which " blighted my pride and almost cooled my military zeal.

" It was nutting season ; I made a party to go, and we arrived at the wood, where the filberts hung as thick as laurels on a soldier's brow. We had not bagged more than a bushel, when we were pounced upon by three keepers, and taken prisoners to the barracks. The three boys who were my companions on this excursion got two dozen stripes ; I lost my *two* as fife-major, and was turned back to my original post as drummer, or rather as fifer. This severe punishment did not arise from the enormity of purloining the nuts, but from the fact of our being found some four miles from the cantonment. Under these circumstances we might have been taken up as deserters, and the keepers have received two pounds each man ; so that, upon the whole, we had reason to be grateful that the more serious offence was not urged against us."

Shortly after his reduction to the ranks, the regiment was transferred to Helsea Barracks, Portsmouth ; and the incidents of this march helped to restore our hero's good spirits. He soon became an old campaigner, so far as good living went. The landlords upon whom he and his comrades were quartered, we are told, did not always behave well : they had a way of trying to blunt these young soldiers' appetites with greasy pea-soup and heavy suet dumplings, before producing their roast

and boiled meat ; but such indigestible dishes John took care to avoid, stating that they were injurious to his constitution, that the doctors had forbidden them in his case, and so on. If the extreme delicacy of their stomachs happened not to be suited by the fare set before them, these little rascals were apt to avenge themselves by leaving very uncomplimentary records of their disapproval written with a lighted candle on the ceiling for the benefit of future guests. This was but one mild form of their displeasure. Sometimes they would go so far as to forage for themselves in their host's poultry-yard ; for in these days soldiers were seldom too scrupulous, and the passage of troops even through a friendly country might well be dreaded by the inhabitants. The band boys had the advantage of being able to hide away geese and ducks in their drums. So John Shipp describes an adventure which had nearly ended for him as badly as he deserved.

"I was once myself a party concerned in a pilfering of this kind ; at least, indirectly so, for I was accessory to the act of stealing a fine goose—a witness of its death (or rather what we supposed its death)—and an assistant in *drumming* it. Moreover, I do not doubt that I should have willingly lent a hand towards eating it, also. The goose, however, was, in our opinion at least, very snugly secured, and we commenced our march without the least fear of detection, chuckling in our sleeves how completely we had eluded the landlord's vigilance. The bird only wanted dressing to complete the joke, and discussion was running high among us as to how that could be accomplished, when, to our astonishment, who should pass us on horseback but the landlord himself ! He rode very coolly by, and, as he took no sort of notice of us, we concluded that he might very probably have other business on the road, and for a time we thought nothing more of the matter ; but what were our feelings when, on halting in the market-place, we perceived this very landlord in earnest conversation with our colonel ; and, to all appearance, 'laying down the law,' as it is called, in a most strenuous manner ! At last the colonel and he moved towards us ; on perceiving which my knees broke into double-quick time, and my heart into a full gallop.

"On arriving near to the spot where our guilty party was drawn up, the colonel, addressing us, stated that 'the gentleman who stood by his side complained that he had lost one of his

geese, and had informed him that he had good reason to suspect that some of the party to whom he now spoke had stolen it.' For the satisfaction of 'the gentleman' (whom we, one and all, most heartily wished under ground), our knapsacks were ordered to be examined, and underwent the most scrupulous inspection; but no goose was to be found. Professing his regret for the trouble he had caused, and apparently satisfied that his suspicions were ill-founded, our worthy landlord was just on the point of leaving us, and the boys around were grinning with delight at the notion of having so effectually deceived him, when, to our utter confusion and dismay, the goose at this very juncture gave a deep groan, and the landlord protested roundly that 'that there sound was from his goose.' Upon this the investigation was renewed with redoubled ardour; our great-coats were turned inside out, and, in short, almost everything belonging to us was examined with the minutest attention; but still no goose was to be found. The officers could not refrain from smiling, and the boys began again to grin at the fun; but this merriment was doomed to be but of short duration, for the poor goose, now in its last moments, uttered another groan, more loud and mournful than the former one. In fact, the vital spark had just taken its flight, and this might be construed into the last dying speech of the ill-fated bird, and a full confession of its dreadful situation and murder. The drum, in which the now defunct goose was confined, stood close against the landlord's elbow, and his ear was, unfortunately for us, so correct in ascertaining whence the sound of woe proceeded, that he at once roared out, 'Dang my buttons, if my goose bean't in that there drum!'

"These words were daggers to our souls; we made sure of as many stripes on our backs as there were feathers on the goose's; and our merriment was suddenly changed into mortification and despair. The drum-head was ordered to be taken off, and sure enough there lay poor goosy, as dead as a herring. The moment the landlord perceived it, he protested that, 'as he was a sinner, that was his goose.' This assertion there was no one among us hardy enough to deny; and the colonel desired that the goose should be given up to the publican, assuring him at the same time that he should cause the offenders to be severely punished for the theft which had been committed. Fortunately for our poor backs, we now found a truly humane

and kind-hearted man in the landlord whom we had offended ; for no sooner did he find that affairs were taking a more serious turn than he had contemplated, and that it was likely that he should be the cause of getting a child flogged, than he affected to doubt the identity of the goose, and at length utterly disclaimed it, saying to the colonel : ‘ This is none of mine, sir ; I see it has a black spot on the back, whereas mine was pure white ; besides, it has a black head. I wish you a good-morning, sir, and am very sorry for the trouble I have given you.’ Thus saying, he left us, muttering, as he went along : ‘ Get a child flogged for a tarnation old goose ? No, no ! ’ ”

Every step he took carried a ton weight off the hearts of these culprits. Their colonel saw pretty well how the case stood, but not thinking fit to be more severe than the generous owner of the *corpus delicti*, he let the boys off with a sharp wiggling, and the business ended happily by the roasting and eating of the goose.

For nearly a year the regiment remained at Helsea Barracks, where they passed by the name of “ the Red Knights,” from their clothing being all of that colour. John remembers nothing worth mentioning that happened to him during this time, except his being sentenced to a week in the black-hole for the offence known to soldiers as *eating his shoes*.

“ This punishment I brought upon myself in the following manner. I had been out to receive my half-mounting, consisting of a pair of shoes, a shirt, two pair of stockings, and a stock ; and on my way home, as ill luck would have it, an old woman, with whom I had frequently before had dealings, and who was well known among us by the title of the plum-pudding woman, happened to throw herself in my way. Her pudding was smoking hot ; I was exceedingly hungry ; and my mouth watered so at the tempting sight that I could not drag myself away. But, much as I longed for a slice, what was to be done ? I had no money, and my friend the plum-pudding woman was by far too old a soldier to give trust till pay-day. The pudding, however, it was impossible for me to dispense with ; and finding, therefore, that all my promises and entreaties, with the view of obtaining credit, were fruitless, I at length, in an evil hour, incited by the savoury smell which issued from the old woman’s basket, proposed to her to buy my shoes. After a good deal of bargaining we at length came to an understanding, by which it

was agreed, that in consideration of a quarter of a yard of pudding and a shilling, to be to me paid and delivered, my new shoes were to be handed over to the dealer in plum-pudding, as her own proper goods and chattels. This contract being honourably completed on both sides, I retreated to a solitary shed to eat my 'duff' (the name by which this description of pudding was well known among us), where, without any great exertion, I soon brought the two extremities of my quarter of a yard together. The last mouthful put me to the extremity of my wits to devise how I could possibly account for the sudden disappearance of my shoes. My first impulse was to run in search of the old woman, and endeavour, by fair promises, to coax her out of the shoes again; but I soon found that no such chance was left me, for she had made a precipitate retreat from the place where we had transacted our business together, knowing well that she was punishable for having bought such articles of me. Nothing appeared to be now left for me but a palpable falsehood; and, although of this I had a great abhorrence, yet I really had not sufficient courage to think of avowing the literal truth. At length I thought I had hit upon a sort of compromise, and I determined to say that I had 'dropped' my shoes on my way home, which though not exactly the fact, yet approached nearer to the truth than anything else I could devise, likely to serve my end. As on all other occasions of the kind, however, it appeared that I might just as well have made a full confession at once; for my statement was not believed, and as I could not in any other way account satisfactorily for the elopement of my shoes, I was ordered seven days' black-hole for the purpose of refreshing my memory. Against this punishment I prayed long and loudly, but all to no purpose; so, with the remainder of my day's rations under my arm, off I was marched, not much elated with the dreary prospect before me.

"When I heard the door of the cell creak upon its hinges behind me, and the huge key grate in the lock, I began to think that I had parted with my shoes too cheap, and, for some time after, I sat myself down in a corner and brooded in melancholy mood over the misfortune which I had by my own folly brought upon myself. But I was never one of the desponding kind, and it therefore soon occurred to me that, instead of indulging in dismal reflections, it would be far wiser and more pleasant to devise some means by which I might contrive to amuse myself

during the period of my confinement. Seven days and seven nights appeared to me at first to be a long time to remain engaged in darkness; and yet there was certainly something soldier-like in the situation. The mere fact of being a prisoner had a military sound with it. To be sure, I was imprisoned for having eaten my shoes; but what of that? Was it not quite as easy for me to imagine myself a prisoner of war? Certainly it was; and accordingly, with this impression strong on my mind, I dropped into a profound sleep in the midst of my meditations, and dreamed that I was deposited in this dungeon by the chance of war.

"On waking I found myself extremely cold, from which I inferred that it would be necessary for me to contrive some plan by which I might comfort my body as well as my mind; and I therefore immediately set about standing on my head, walking on my hands, tumbling head over heels, and similar gymnastic exercises. In this manner, sleeping and playing by turns, I managed to pass my time in the black-hole for one whole day and night, by no means unpleasantly; when, about nine o'clock the next morning, I heard the well-known voice of the drum-major asking for me, and desiring that I might be liberated. On hearing this order given, I presumed that of course my period of captivity had expired; and, although the time certainly appeared to have passed off at a wonderfully rapid rate, yet I accounted for it by considering that I had slept away the greater part of it; and, in addition to this, that it was but natural it should seem to have passed quickly, since I had been during the whole period exempt from parades, drills, head-soaping, etc. When I first got into the daylight I could scarcely open my eyes, and no sooner had I brought my optics into a state to endure the light, than I was asked by the drum-major how I liked my new abode, and if I was ready to return to it. I perceived, from the smile which accompanied these questions, that I had little further to fear, and I soon understood that I had only spent one day and one night in the black-hole, and that the remainder of my sentence had been remitted. I was hailed by all my comrades as if I had been cast on, and escaped from, some desolate island; and, having macadamised my inward man with six penny pies (out of the shilling I had received from the old pudding-woman, of which I was still possessed), I was soon as fit for fun again as the best of them."

III.

SHIPP's regiment now received orders to hold itself in readiness for a move. The boy fervently hoped to be sent on foreign service, but their destination turned out to be no further off than Guernsey. He embarked on board a small sloop, and almost at the outset of the short voyage had a rough introduction to the pleasures of sea-life. Like the hero of the old ballad :

“ They hadna sailed a league, a league,
A league, but barely three,
When the lift grew dark, and the wind blew loud,
And gurly grew the sea.”

Then dismal was the scene on board among these poor red-coats, sea-sick, and crowded together like cattle.

“ There were soldiers crying, women screaming, children squalling, sailors swearing, the storm all the while continuing to increase, until at length it blew a perfect hurricane ; the rain came down in torrents, and the vivid lightning's flash exhibited the fear depicted on every countenance. At this juncture a poor frightened soldier mustered up courage enough to ask the captain or master of the sloop if there was any danger ? At this question every ear was open, and the son of Neptune gruffly replied : ‘ Danger, shipmate ? If the storm continues another hour, I would not give a rope-yarn for all your lives. When we reach that point on the larboard-bow, you must throw out your grappling-irons, and hold in, for she will be then close-hauled, and go under water like a duck, and you will all be in David's locker before you can say *Luff, boy !* ’ ”

Our hero, wet to the skin as he was, and sitting squeezed up on deck, head and knees together, close to the helm, takes credit to himself for not feeling so much alarm, though the little craft dived through the waves like a gull, and the skipper's coarse pleasantries were not calculated to reassure the quaking landmen. There seems to have been, indeed, no slight danger. One tremendous sea carried away the foresail ; another washed three sailors overboard. To add to the confusion, a light was reported ahead, which the captain loudly declared to be a Frenchman. At this news, the commander of the soldiers began to call his men to arms, shouting for the

sergeant, the bugler, the drummer. But neither drum nor drummer was forthcoming. The men, says Shipp, were in no condition to come to the scratch, French or no French ; and the gallant officer had to stagger about on deck by himself, sword in hand, till another sea washed his cocked hat into the waves, and tumbled him down into the hold.

Luckily the strange sail sheered off ; but the storm continued through the night, with thunder and lightning rending the black clouds, and morning dawned upon what the skipper is said to have called to be the heaviest sea he had ever seen. Guernsey came in sight, but the wind was foul, and several tacks had to be made before reaching port. The soldiers, what with fear, cold, hunger, wet, and want of sleep, were completely worn out. But as they drew towards land, they had a fine prospect to cheer them : lofty rocks, studded with little cottages, villages peeping out at the bottom of green bays, the town of St. Pierre perched up picturesquely on the brow of an eminence, with Fort George beyond, the longed-for goal of this miserable voyage.

At last the sloop ran into the quiet waters of the harbour. Boats were brought, and the drenched soldiers rejoiced to be set once more upon firm ground. Shipp, for one, found himself in a sorry plight. He liked to have a good opinion of his personal appearance, but that was hardly possible now. "I looked for all the world like a squeezed lemon, or the bag of a Scotch pipe ; and I should have been glad to have taken the edge off my appetite, and the dirt off my clothes, instead of dancing through the town ; but I was, of course, obliged to obey orders, and when I struck up my tune (for I still led the fifers) I tipped Mounseer 'The Downfall of Paris.' I found the march did me a great deal of good ; and by the time I reached the barracks I was in prime order for my breakfast."

At Fort George our hero found himself in very good quarters, on the whole, though not allowed quite so much liberty as he should have liked. He was fond of roaming in the country, and of all the beauties of nature, he waggishly hints, none more commended itself to him than an *orchard*. It seems to have been in connection with this truly boyish taste that, a few days after arriving here, he saw his name posted up at the gate—"John Shipp confined to barracks for one week." This confinement was intolerable to him, but a lucky accident

came to cut it short. The drum-major was taken seriously ill ; the colonel inspected the drummers on morning parade, and picked out Shipp for this vacant post, on account of the pride he always took in keeping himself clean, as he thinks, but perhaps his height had something to do with it. At the same time the colonel gave him a ticket for a play, and placed several boys under his charge to accompany him to the theatre.

Promoted, rewarded, and trusted, he had not the sense to keep long in favour. "I had scarcely got the stick of office into my hands, before I cut so many capers with it that I soon capered myself back to the dignity and full rank of fifer ; was deprived of my staff of office, and of what I considered even much worse—my liberty. My name was again exhibited to public gaze at the drawbridge-gate, for seven long days, during which I was obliged to kick my heels along the ramparts, contenting myself with contemplating the distant prospect. One day I effaced my name from the list of the confined, unobserved by the sentinel ; but in this I was detected by the sergeant, for which I had the felicity of attending drill three times a day with my musket reversed, and my coat turned inside out ; and in this manner, for several hours each day, I was obliged to comply with the mandates of a little bandy-legged drill-sergeant, who did not fail to enforce his authority and dignity in a manner by no means agreeable to my feelings, especially to those of my back. This I could bear well enough—indeed, I was obliged to bear it ; but my turned coat seemed to harg upon me like some badge of ignominy, and I imagined that every eye was upon me."

This open display of disgrace went much against the grain with him, and he speaks strongly against punishments of the kind as hardening depraved natures while souring and irritating a spirited lad like himself. It only affected him with a feeling of recklessness and revenge. But when the regiment was ordered back to Portsmouth, his degradation came to an end, and, with his coat turned the right way, he embarked, "as sprightly as any."

Before long came another change of quarters. The regiment of boys having by this time grown up into young men, fit for foreign service, they were embarked on different transports for the Cape of Good Hope. John Shipp had his berth on board the *Surat Castle*, East Indiaman, which was shamefully overcrowded, men having literally to sleep on one another, he says :

in the orlop deck the beds were three tiers high, besides hammocks. To make things worse, they had as fellow-passengers a number of Lascars, picked out of a state of abject want and wretchedness in every sink of London poverty. Many of them had lost their fingers and toes through the severity of the winter; others had contracted loathsome diseases from filth and bad living; most were covered with sores and vermin. The smell between decks was horrible. A perfect pestilence had already broken out among these miserable objects, unable to help themselves and left to die like dogs without aid, for there were scarcely men enough to work the ship; then the moment the breath was out of their bodies, they were thrown overboard to the sharks.

With such a cargo of infection on board, the *Surat Castle* set sail in company of a fleet of sixty ships bound for all parts of the world—a splendid sight, “which but ill accorded with the aching hearts, lacerated bodies and wounded minds of the poor creatures below.” It was fine to see “each proud bark dipping her majestic head in the silvery deep,” but for our hero and his shipmates the voyage was to be one of sore trials, which he describes in his loftiest style.

“Such firing, such signals, such tacking and running across each other now prevailed, that our captain resolved to run from it; and the evening had scarcely spread her sombre curtains over the western ocean, and the golden clouds begun to change their brilliant robes of day for those of murky night, when our crew ‘up helm,’ and stole away from the motley fleet, plying every sail, and scudding through the blue waters like some aerial car or phantom-ship, smoothly gliding over the silvery deep. In three or four hours we had entirely lost sight of our convoy. We were running at the rate of eleven knots an hour, and, as it seemed, into the very jaws of danger. The clouds began to assume a pitchy and awful darkness, the distant thunder rolled angrily, and the vivid lightning’s flash struck each watching eye dim, and, for a moment, hid the rolling and gigantic wave from the sight of fear. The wind whistled terrifically, and the shattered sails fanned the flying clouds. All was consternation; every eye betrayed fear. Sail was taken in, masts lowered and yards stayed—preparations which bespoke no good tidings to the inquiring and terrified landsman. I was seated in the poop, alone, holding by a hen-coop, and viewing

the mountainous and angry billows, with my hand partly covering my eyes to protect them against the lightning. It was a moment of the most poignant sorrow to me; my heart still lingered on the white cliffs of Albion, nor could I wean it from the sorrowful reflection that I was, perhaps, leaving that dear and beloved country for ever. During this struggle of my feelings, our vessel shipped a tremendous sea over her poop, and then angrily shook her head, and seemed resolved to buffet the raging elements with all her might and main. The ship was shortly after this 'hove to,' and lay comparatively quiet; and in about a couple of hours the wind slackened, and we again stood on our way, the masts cracking under her three topsails and fore storm-staysail. However, she rode much easier, and the storm still continued to abate. I was dreadfully wet and cold, and my teeth chattered most woefully; so I made towards the gun-deck, some portion of which was allotted for the soldiers. There the heat was suffocating, and the stench intolerable. The scene in the orlop-deck was truly distressing: soldiers, their wives and children, all lying together in a state of the most dreadful sea-sickness, groaning in concert, and calling for a drop of water to cool their parched tongues. I screwed myself up behind a butt, and soon fell into that stupor which sea-sickness will create. In this state I continued until morning; and, when I awoke, I found that the hurricane had returned with redoubled fury, and that we were standing towards land. The captain came ahead to look out, and, after some consideration, he at last told the officer to stand out to sea. The following morning was ushered in by the sun's bright beams diffusing their lustre on the dejected features of frightened and helpless mortals. The dark clouds of sad despair were in mercy driven from our minds, and the bright beams of munificent love from above took their place. The before downcast eye was seen to sparkle with delight, and the haggard cheek of despondency resumed its wonted serenity. The tempestuous bosom of the main was now smooth as a mirror, and all seemed grateful and cheerful, directing the eye of hope towards the far-distant haven to which we were bound.

"A great number of the fleet were the same morning to be seen emerging from their shelter, or hiding-place, from the terrific hurricane of the day before; but our captain was resolved to be alone; so the same night he crowded sail, and, by

the following morning's dawn, we were so much ahead that not a sail was visible, save one solitary sloop, that seemed bending her way towards England.

"Some three weeks after this we were again visited by a most dreadful storm, that far exceeded the former one, and from which we suffered much external injury, our main-topmast and other small masts being carried away. But the interior of our poor bark exhibited a scene of far greater desolation. We were then far from land, and a pestilential disease was raging among us in all its terrific forms. Naught could be seen but the pallid cheek of disease, or the sunken eye of despair. The sea-gulls soared over the ship, and huge sharks hovered around it, watching for their prey. These creatures are sure indications of ships having some pestilential disease on board, and they have been known to follow a vessel so circumstanced to the most distant climes—to countries far from their native element. To add to our distresses, some ten barrels of ship's paint, or colour, got loose from their lashings, and rolled from side to side, and from head to stern, carrying everything before them by their enormous weight. From our inability to stop them in their destructive progress, they one and all were staved in, and the gun-deck soon became one mass of colours, in which lay the dead and the dying, both white and black.

"It would be difficult for the reader to picture to himself a set of men more deplorably situated than we now were; but our distresses were not yet at their height: for, as though our miseries still required aggravation, the scurvy broke out among us in a most frightful manner. Scarcely a single individual on board escaped this melancholy disorder, and the swollen legs, and gums protruding beyond the lips, attested the malignancy of the visitation. The dying were burying the dead, and the features of all on board wore the garb of mourning.

"Every assistance and attention that humanity or generosity could dictate, was freely and liberally bestowed by the officers on board, who cheerfully gave up their fresh meats and many other comforts for the benefit of the distressed; but the pestilence baffled the aid of medicine and the skill of the medical attendants. My poor legs were as big as drums; my gums swollen to an enormous size; my tongue too big for my mouth; and all I could eat was raw potatoes and vinegar. But my kind and affectionate officers sometimes brought me some tea and

coffee, at which the languid eye would brighten, and the tear of gratitude would intuitively fall, in spite of my efforts to repress what was thought unmanly. Our spirits were so subdued by suffering, and our frames so much reduced and emaciated, that I have seen poor men weep bitterly, they knew not why. Thus passed the time; men dying in dozens, and, ere their blood was cold, hurled into the briny deep, there to become a prey to sharks. It was a dreadful sight to see the bodies of our comrades the bone of disputation with these voracious natives of the dreary deep; and the reflection that such might soon be our own fate would crush our best feelings, and with horror drive the eye from such a sight. Our muster-rolls were dreadfully thinned; indeed, almost every fourth man amongst the Europeans, and more than two-thirds of the natives, had fallen victims to the diseases on board, and it was by the mercy of Providence only that the ship ever reached her destination, for we had scarcely a seaman fit for duty to work her. Never shall I forget the morning I saw the land. In the moment of joy I forgot all my miseries, and cast them into the deep, in the hope of future happiness. This is mortal man's career. Past scenes are drowned and forgotten in the anticipation of happier events to come; and, by a cherished delusion, we allow ourselves to be transported into the fairy land of imagination, in quest of future joys—never, perhaps, to be realised, but the contemplation of which in the distance serves at least to soothe us under present suffering.

“When the view of land first blessed our sight, the morning was foggy and dreary. We were close under the land, and were in the very act of standing from it, when the fog dispersed, the wind shifted fair, and we ran in close to the mouth of Simon's Bay. The now agreeable breeze ravished our sickened souls, and the surrounding view delighted our dim and desponding eyes. Everyone who could crawl was upon deck to welcome the sight of land and inhale the salubrious air. Every soul on board seemed elated with joy; and, when the anchor was let go, it was indeed an anchor to the broken hearts of poor creatures then stretched on the bed of sickness, who had not during the whole voyage seen the bright sun rising and setting—sights at sea that beggar the power of description. For myself, I jumped and danced about like a merry-andrew, and I found, or fancied I found, myself already a convalescent.”

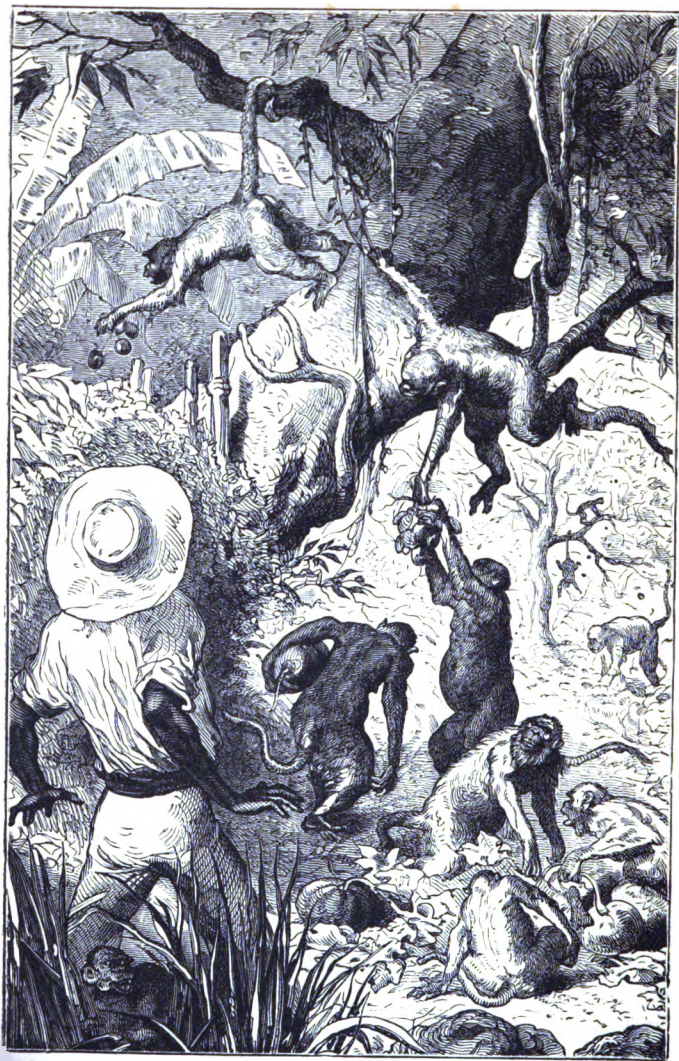
But their hopes of landing were still to be disappointed. When the medical authorities learned what a bill of health the *Surat Castle* had, she was ordered to lie in quarantine for a time. Fresh meat, bread, tea, sugar, coffee and fruits of all kinds being sent on board, the scurvy soon began to pass away. At length the troops landed and were marched, or rather carried, to their barracks; then they had the luxury, such as it was, of finding themselves treated like sick children for a fortnight or so—no drills, plenty to eat, kind nursing till the disease disappeared. Seventy-two men of the detachment had died, and the only satisfaction of the survivors was to have arrived before the rest of their comrades.

The regiment being now united, was after a short time moved from Simon's Town to another station on the coast, a few miles nearer Cape Town. This station was infested by a curious enemy in the shape of baboons, which used to assemble in large bodies upon the craggy and precipitous hills bordering the shore, and gave the soldiers a great deal of trouble by frequent raids into their quarters. They were as big as men, and in other respects more like human beings than any quadruped Shipp had ever seen, notably, as he records with due indignation, in that they were "abominable thieves." He himself has just let out with no hint of compunction, that finding their allowance of a pound of inferior meat and three-quarters of a pound of bread per day, too scanty for growing lads, he and his fellows were in the way of helping themselves to potatoes from the gardens of the Dutch settlers; but it was not to be tolerated that monkeys should behave with such dishonesty. So the soldiers declared war against the bold baboons.

"Our barracks were under the hills, and when we went to parade we were invariably obliged to leave armed men for the protection of our property; and, even in spite of this, they have frequently stolen our blankets and great-coats, or anything else they could lay their claws on. A poor woman, a soldier's wife, had washed her blanket and hung it out to dry, when some of these miscreants, who were ever on the watch, stole it, and ran off with it into the hills, which are high and woody. This drew upon them the indignation of the regiment, and we formed a strong party, armed with sticks and stones, to attack them, with the view of recovering the property and inflicting such chastisement as might be a warning to them for the future. I was

on the advance, with about twenty men, and I made a *détour* to cut them off from caverns to which they always flew for shelter. They observed my movement, and immediately detached about fifty to guard the entrance, while the others kept their post, and we could distinctly see them collecting large stones and other missiles. One old grey-headed one, in particular, who often paid us a visit at the barracks, and was known by the name of 'Father Murphy,' was seen distributing his orders and planning the attack, with the judgment of one of our best generals. Finding that my design was defeated, I joined the *corps de main*, and rushed on to the attack, when a scream from Father Murphy was a signal for a general encounter, and the host of baboons under his command rolled down enormous stones upon us, so that we were obliged to give up the contest, or some of us must inevitably have been killed. They actually followed us to our very doors, shouting in indication of victory; and, during the whole night, we heard dreadful yells and screaming, so much so, that we expected a night attack. In the morning, however, we found that all this rioting had been created by disputes about the division of the blanket, for we saw eight or ten of them with pieces of it on their backs, as old women wear their cloaks. Amongst the number strutted Father Murphy. These rascals annoyed us day and night, and we dared not venture out unless a party of five or six went together.

"One morning Father Murphy had the consummate impudence to walk straight into the grenadier barracks, and he was in the very act of purloining a sergeant's regimental coat, when a corporal's guard (which had just been relieved) took the liberty of stopping the gentleman at the door, and secured him. He was a most powerful brute, and, I am persuaded, too much for any single man. Notwithstanding his frequent misdemeanours, we did not like to kill the poor creature: so, having first taken the precaution of muzzling him, we determined on shaving his head and face, and then turning him loose. To this ceremony, strange to say, he submitted very quietly, and, when shaved, he was really an exceedingly good-looking fellow, and I have seen many a 'blood' in Bond Street not half so prepossessing in his appearance. We then started him up the hill, though he seemed rather reluctant to leave us. Some of his companions came down to meet him; but, from the alteration which shaving his head and face had made in him, they



MONKEY TRICKS.

did not know him again, and accordingly pelted him with stones and beat him with sticks, in so unmerciful a manner, that poor Father Murphy actually sought protection from his enemies, and he in time became quite domesticated and tame."

Such a tale reads like one told to the marines, but other travellers give much the same account of these animals, as making forays in organised parties, and acting as if by concert against the settlers who oppose them. They have even been said to set sentinels and to punish these if they should allow the main body to be surprised in their depredations. Goldsmith describes them as robbing orchards or vineyards in a most expeditious and business-like manner: one remains on the watch, while some pluck the fruit and pass it to their comrades, forming a line and catching it in their paws like a cricket-ball. When caught, they are not easily tamed, but may be taught to eat cooked meat, to drink beer and smoke tobacco. These hairy parodies of the human species would seem, in fact, to show an extraordinary capacity for acquiring all the bad habits of men.

IV.

OUR hero was soon to see service against more formidable enemies than baboons, the Caffres, to wit, who, after their custom, were robbing and murdering among the Dutch Boers up-country, or, as it might be put from another point of view, fiercely defending their native land against these encroaching strangers. His regiment spent several months in camp at Windbourg, where they suffered greatly from the inclemency of the weather, having no other quarters than small bell tents on damp ground; and besides, "our very lives were drilled out by brigade field-days," with which their superiors thought well to keep them from idleness.

Fretting under this round of hardships and useless activity, Shipp was heartily glad to join a rifle company formed of men picked out from various regiments to be used in checking the devastations of the Caffres. Dressed in green, and their barrels being browned to fit them for scouting service in the woods, they set out along with a company of the 91st and a body of Hottentots. A frigate carried them to Algoa Bay, thence they

marched some hundreds of miles into the interior, as far as a place called Grafenette, where they took up their quarters in the Dutch church.

The line of march had been rough and infested with wild beasts. One day Shipp and a comrade were out shooting ducks, and had just brought one down into a pool of water surrounded by grass higher than a man's body, when they heard a tremendous roar and saw the whole pool in a state of commotion. John was about to plunge into the water after his game, but he changed his mind on seeing a great white elephant rush out from the cover, roaring loudly and beating aside the grass with his trunk. Neither he nor his companion had ever seen an elephant before, and now they found themselves by no means anxious for a nearer view, so, leaving the duck, they took to their heels and never stopped till they were safe in their lager.

Hardly less ferocious than wild beasts were the Caffres.

"At every farmer's house on our line of march we found sad vestiges of murder and desolation. Whole families had been wantonly massacred by this wild and misguided race of people, whose devastations it was now our duty to check, and whose ignorance is so extraordinary, that I am persuaded they are insensible that murder is a crime. Beautiful farm-houses were to be seen still smoking, the families either murdered, or run away to seek shelter elsewhere. Not a living creature was to be seen, unless, perchance, a poor dog might be discovered howling over the dead body of his master; or some wounded horse or ox, groaning with the stab of a spear or other mutilation. The savage Caffre exults in these appalling sights; gaping wounds, and the pangs of the dying, are to his dark and infatuated mind the very acme of enjoyment. This barbarous race, when they have succeeded in any of their murderous exploits, appear to be so excited to ecstasy, that they will jump about in a sort of frenzy, hurling their spears in all directions, and in the most reckless manner, either at man or beast. They are quite insensible to the value of money, which they would accept on account of its glitter only; while a mere shining gilt button would be prized by them as of inestimable value. In short, they seem scarcely to possess a rational idea beyond what may tend to the gratification of the appetite; and I have myself seen them with women's gowns, petticoats, shawls, etc., tied round their legs,

and between their toes, and in this manner they would run wildly into the woods, shouting in exultation."

But the soldiers found a difficulty in getting more than traces of their enemy's presence. The Caffres at their approach had fled to almost inaccessible fastnesses, driving away their huge herds of cattle. A few scouts hung about, watching the advance of the troops, who had sometimes slight skirmishes with them, but to little purpose, in the intricate woods, where the natives were at home. When shot at, they would throw themselves on their faces and let the ball pass over them, while, even if hit, the Brown Bess of the period might fail to make much impression on their garments and bucklers of hide. On the other hand, their aim with the assegai, since so fatally known to British troops, was almost certain at sixty or eighty paces. Each warrior carried at his back some dozen of these weapons. Before the soldier even suspected his danger, a dart would come whizzing through the air, and be still quivering in his body after the invisible marksman was out of reach in the thick bush.

The detachment must have had more than enough of this harassing and inglorious warfare. From making their way through almost impenetrable forests, over rocky hills, and across deep streams, the men were soon in a comically ragged condition. Their shoes, indeed, they replaced well enough by pieces of raw buffalo-hide, allowed to dry on the foot and take its shape. But how were they to keep whole and neat their once clean regimentals? Pipe-clay was out of the question in this wilderness; patches of any colour or material were the order of the day, so that a little way off they looked not unlike spotted leopards, Shipp declares, whose own plight was specially deplorable.

"During these two years I had sprung up some six inches, outgrowing, of course, both my jacket and trousers; and, when I was in full case for parade, my figure must have been exceedingly ludicrous. My jacket was literally a strait-jacket; for, from its extreme tightness, I could scarcely raise my hand to my head. My pantaloons, or trousers, had been during the whole period continually rising in the world, and now they would scarcely condescend to protect my protruding knees. I was but a novice at the needle, so that the patches I put on were either too small or too large. In this predicament I had

to march nearly fifteen hundred miles through Africa. The rest of the men were but little better off, and we might well have been compared to Falstaff's ragged recruits, with whom he swore he would not march through Coventry."

After two years of such unsatisfactory work, doing very little good to themselves and no more harm to the Caffres, they were set free when the British Government gave back the Cape of Good Hope to its first colonists the Dutch, though, as we know to our cost, this surrender was only a temporary one. The main body marched to Algoa Bay, and there took ship for Cape Town; but John was detached to travel overland in charge of the officers' baggage. For companions he had a Dutch Boer's family and their Hottentot servants, all well armed, as their road lay through a wild country infested by the savages. They had to move in military order, and with constant vigilance: Shipp led the way on horseback, a loaded rifle slung over his back, and a pistol ready in his holsters; beside him rode the Dutchman's two sons; then came four Hottentots, armed with muskets; then the old "boss" himself, and behind four waggons containing the rest of the family and the baggage. The rearguard consisted of two head-servants on bullocks, then four more natives on foot with their families, some of the women carrying two children on their backs. Thus they would accomplish twenty miles a day over rough and hilly ground; and if they could not reach any farm-house by sunset, the most open spot that might be found was selected to make the lager, the waggons being placed in a square with the cattle inside, and six men out of the twelve keeping watch all night against the Caffres, or beasts of prey, always prowling about their little fortified encampment. These savages were the Iroquois of South Africa, making war with the same cautious, cunning, and persistent ferocity as marked the backwoods Indian.

"Their system of attack is this: under the garb of night, when all is still, save the roaring lion, the hungry tiger (tiger-cats?), or the screeching owl, they will crawl on their hands and knees, imitating the cries of any animal of the woods, or any bird of the air. At the smallest noise they will turn themselves flat on the ground, so that you may walk close by and not observe them; and the first indication given you of having such dangerous neighbours is by the incision of a spear or the blow of a club. These imitations of the cries of animals and

chirping of birds are well understood amongst themselves. No wonder, then, that we should watch. It was no unusual thing in the morning to see their spears lodged in the top of our waggons, and close by where we kept watch ; but we never attempted to leave our possessions, and resolved not to throw away our precious powder and ball on slight occasions. To narrate the numerous trials, watchings, privations, perils, and escapes of this trip, would of itself fill a larger space than I can devote to such a detail."

Our hero's pen, indeed, has now a gentler theme to dwell on. This precocious votary of Mars, in his seventeenth year, found himself struck by the dart of Cupid. He fell in love with the younger of the Dutchman's two daughters, Sabina by name. Of course she was a lovely creature, tall, slim, dark, symmetrical, with vivacious and interesting manners, and an education that "had by no means been neglected." In the course of their perilous journey, nothing could be more natural than that this paragon should single out the young soldier as her chosen companion, seeking in his society and conversation some agreeable change from the coarse ways of her father, "a very gross man," and those true Boors, her brothers. John was little reluctant to be thus distinguished ; then how could he long remain insensible to the charms of his fair fellow-traveller ? He would walk by her side while she rode his horse the whole march. Thus the days, winged by young love, passed away like hours in the usual sighs, glances, blushes, protestations and so on, till the matter got as far as vows. She was fifteen ; but both of them looked older than they were.

It was only on approaching their destination that the youth for his part began to awake from the fond dreams that had so sweetly shortened the way. With despair, he remembered that stern fate would soon tear him from his charmer. He had no hope of the colonel allowing him to marry at his age. The more he reflected, the more distressing appeared his situation. There was but one way of being true to love, and that was by proving false to duty. The very idea of *desertion*, he protests, startled him ; but drive it away as he might from his distracted mind, it ever returned, haunting him day and night, sticking to him "like ivy on the crumbling tower." In this perplexity he took counsel of Sabina.

"The moment I hinted at the possibility of parting, she

turned as pale as death ; I saw the crystal tear steal down her beautiful cheek ; she trembled, and at last swooned away. It was then the dark fiend again urged me on, and I promised, in the moment of grief and excitement, that I would desert, and follow her wherever she might go. Her sweet eye beamed ineffable pleasure ; she seized my hand, kissed it a hundred times, and she said, in a most pathetic manner, ' Will you really return with me to my home ? ' I declared I would, whatever might be the result. She said, ' Swear it, and I shall live ; deny me, and I shall die.' "

At such an appeal what was there for him but to promise to dare and do anything for her sake ? The rest of the family joined their persuasions, urging him to return with them, and drawing bright pictures of the happiness he would enjoy with their beautiful sister, far from drill and pipeclay. The old Dutchman even pressed him to take the opportunity of appropriating all the officers' property entrusted to him. This crime he would not hear of, but he agreed to desert and return with them.

Scarcely had he done so than conscience once more resumed its sway : recollections of his native country, of glory, of the regiment, of the disgrace he was about to bring upon himself, rushed in upon his bewildered mind. He tried to man himself to obey the call of duty ; sometimes he thought of flying from temptation, and seeking protection from his love in the rough ranks of the regiment ; but he felt that a single glance from Sabina's eyes, the first whisper of love from her lips, would be enough to melt his firmest resolution. The best hope for him seemed to be that the regiment might have sailed before he reached Cape Town.

But the regiment was found still at Cape Town, and the poor lad had to make his own choice between honour and passion. His comrades hailed him with joy, fearing that he had been killed by the Caffres ; his officers congratulated him, and made him handsome presents for taking such good care of their things. But all this was forgotten when in the evening he rejoined his siren. He was told that the family meant to start back on the following Monday. The die must now be cast. He promised to accompany them. Yet even at the last moment, he protests, he had another struggle with himself, so that he was an hour behind the appointed time. Sabina took

his arm, and thus he became a deserter. "Reader, judge me not harshly: consider my youth and the temptation I had to contend against." Pilfering and mischief, we have seen, lay light enough on his mind; but desertion is one of the soldier's deadly sins, and, a true soldier, John cannot look back on this heinous act without due contrition and self-reproach.

But the course of true love was not destined to run smooth in this case. The party had got some thirty miles from Cape Town; the lovers were seated in a waggon, busy building blissful castles in the air, when the provost-marshal interrupted their billing and cooing with a pistol pointed at John, and a threat to shoot him if he moved. There could be no resistance: in ten minutes he was torn from the arms of Sabina, and on his way back to barracks with less sympathetic companions. He never again saw her or her family, who would also have been seized if he had not bravely taken all the blame on his own shoulders. They were hardly broad enough to bear it, for the sentence of the court-martial was nothing less than nine hundred and ninety-nine lashes, more than fifty for every year of his life! Such was the discipline of the old regime in the army.

But here John's luck once more favoured him. His colonel, who had been so kind to the lad all along, acted with an indulgence and consideration which some other officers of that day would have done well to imitate. He remitted the whole punishment, sent for the prisoner, admonished him like a parent, painted the crime of desertion in its blackest colours, then dismissed him with an assurance of forgiveness and friendship, expressing a belief that he had been deluded by the Dutchman and his family. This John would not acknowledge till some months later, when no harm could be done by telling the truth of the story.

After all, the loss of his sweetheart does not seem to have weighed much more heavily upon him than the sentence of the court-martial; at least, he says nothing more about her. He was soon himself again, as a certain foreign fire-eater found, when presuming upon the youthfulness of this bold Briton. Some of the Dutch troops to whom the Cape was to be given up, had arrived from Java, Batavia, and other settlements. These men having come down to the wharf to see the English soldiers embark, and advising themselves to be a little insulting where

they durst, "a huge brute sidled up to *me*, with his greasy moustachios, which he began to curl and twist between his forefinger and thumb, at the same time chucking me under the chin and calling me a pretty boy." For this John gave him a kick on the shins. The Dutchman retaliated by trying to pull his ears, but sheered off at the sight of a drawn bayonet.

In the interests of peace, it was as well that the English troops embarked next day, John Shipp sailing on board a small American vessel. He took farewell of Africa with edifying reflections on the many providential escapes he had experienced during the last four years, and a prayer of thanksgiving for the unmerited protection that had been extended to him: with all his love of fun and mischief, our hero was not incapable, at times, of sober, even pious thoughts. The new destination of his regiment was India, where, as things then stood, he might expect no lack of fresh perils and excitement on the way. Fortunate as he was on land, the ocean again proved adverse to him.

"We had scarcely got to sea a day, when we found that it was a difficult matter to determine which was the more cranky, the vessel or the captain. She took in water in large quantities—he grog; she would not go steady—neither would he; she rolled and pitched—so did he; she shook her head—so did he; she was often sea-sick—so was he; in fact, they were a cranky pair. She had lain so long at the Cape, that her bottom had become foul, and she would not go more than four knots an hour, if it blew a hurricane, and then she seemed to tear the very water asunder. We prowled about the deep like the wandering Jew on earth, until at last our water began to evince symptoms of decline, and it was justly feared we should soon suffer much under a hot sun for want of that great essential; but about a week after we stumbled upon land, which, after a great deal of reconnoitring, our wise captain pronounced to be some part of Sumatra.

"However this might be, it was a welcome sight to us; but, as it was late in the evening when we discovered it, we were obliged to steer about the whole night. About ten o'clock the clouds began to thicken, and the wind blew from shore; about twelve it blew a smart gale, and we hove to. Our vessel lay like a log of wood, scarcely moving, till the morning dawned, when the storm had subsided in a great degree, and we stood in for

land. The hills looked woody, and the valleys fertile. We at last got into a small bay, or basin, where the surrounding scenery was beautiful in the extreme. Several canoes were to be seen steering up the creeks, and men and women running into the woods, in seeming alarm and consternation.

"We anchored about three hundred yards from the shore. The movements of the natives did not evince any friendly inclination towards us, but the contrary; and it was fortunate that we had the means of taking by compulsion what we would willingly have purchased, wood and water, those two essentials to man's existence. To convince them, if possible, that our appearance in this basin was not of a hostile nature, a small boat was despatched with six or seven men, four of them armed. I was one, and we approached the shore with great caution. We could plainly see people hiding behind trees, and carrying away their movables from some huts which stood about two hundred yards from shore, where we could also discover fishing-nets, canoes that had been dragged ashore, a few domestic fowls, and one or two goats and kids. We beckoned them to approach, but they seemed shy, and would not come near us. The captain's servant was a native of Ceylon, and could speak several languages. We landed him, but he was justly afraid to venture far from the boat. He soon, however, made them understand the object for which we put into this port, and informed them that we were willing to purchase both wood and water at a reasonable price. This they would not consent to, but requested us immediately to weigh anchor and leave the bay, or dread the displeasure of their king, whom they had apprised of our intrusion into their country. It appeared from this that we had no alternative but to take what we required by force; we therefore disregarded the threats of the subjects of his black majesty, and the following morning got out the long-boat, with implements for getting in water and cutting wood. The latter was already cut to our hands, as the surrounding country was one mass of fuel, that had decayed and been blown down by the tempest. The water was close by, a most beautiful crystal stream; but the moment we had commenced work we saw an enormous number of people, with swords, spears, and daggers, approaching towards us. We formed a line, primed and loaded, and prepared for a fight; but, resolved not to be the aggressors, we again despatched the native servant

to endeavour to reason them into compliance, for which purpose a small safeguard went with him.

"After a great deal of threatening and blustering, they consented to sell the water for five dollars per butt, and the wood in proportion. This exorbitant claim was of course rejected with indignation ; but, still wishing to keep friendly with them, we offered one dollar per butt. This was refused by them, and the servant returned. Meantime, we continued filling our water utensils and collecting firewood with the greatest industry, keeping our eyes on them all the while. There appeared to be a deal of consultation among the natives, and a number of messengers going and coming : at last an arrow was fired, which fell close to where I was standing. Another soon followed it ; and the officer in command of our party then ordered two or three men to fire in the air. This alarmed them so, that they took to their heels, and ran shouting into the woods, and we went hard to work.

"In about an hour the inhabitants, encouraged by our pacific appearance, sent a man to inform us that 'his majesty had been pleased to permit the strangers to tread upon the margin of his country, and drink his water of mercy' (so interpreted by the native servant) ; and that 'his majesty would come and hold communion of friendship with the strangers on the following day, if the day was auspicious ; that we might drink as much water of his mercy as we pleased, and cut as much wood ; but his majesty begged we would not attempt to make incursions into his country, as he could not be held responsible if his elephants and bull-dogs got loose, and destroyed the strangers ; and further, that he would, in his most gracious mercy, send us all sorts of fruits, etc., at a moderate price.'

"To this message we returned a very gracious answer ; and about ten the following morning a great number of boats were seen coming down the several creeks, which, concentrating at the bottom of a small village a little way up the largest creek, at last came on their way towards the ship, in number about thirty, with about four men in each boat. It had been before understood that not one person would be admitted with arms, and only ten people at a time. His majesty did not choose to make his appearance, but had instructed those that did come to say that he had consulted his divines, and they had pronounced the day an inauspicious one. We were therefore de-

prived of his royal presence ; but, if he was as big a thief as those he sent to represent him, his majesty was qualified for a more exalted sphere—the gallows : such a set of rogues I have never seen in the whole course of my life. They brought oranges, plantains, etc., and some few ducks, chickens, and eggs, for barter ; but they were such thieves that you could not trust them even to handle the article you wished to barter. If you trusted it out of your own hand, it was handed by them from one to another, and ultimately to their canoes, and then you might ‘ fish for it,’ to use a soldier’s term.

“ A ludicrous scene took place between a tar and one of these fellows. Jack offered his blanket for sale, as he had now got into a warm climate, and it was of no further use to him. Jack, in good, sound, and intelligible English, particularized the length, breadth, and quality of his blanket, qualifying his description with many an oath, not one syllable of which did the purchaser understand. During the examination of the said blanket, Jack kept hold of one end, pledging his tarry honour to the authenticity of his assertion that it was a real Witney. Some one at this moment took off Jack’s attention, and he withdrew his hand from the blanket, which soon found its way to the canoe. The tar uttered sundry imprecations touching his ‘ daylights ’ and ‘ grappling-irons,’ and was up on deck, and down into the canoe, in a moment, overhauling everything ; but neither the blanket nor the purchaser was to be found. At this the sailor ran about like a madman, until at last he espied the fellow moving down the fore-hatchway. Being certain of his man, he took one hop, skip, and jump, and fastened on the fellow’s neck, vociferating : ‘ Halloa, shipmate, where have you stowed my blanket ? Come, skull it over, or I shall board you before you can say “ Luff.” ’ The fellow did not, of course, understand one word he said ; but Jack soon brought him to his bearings, as he called it, by mooring him on the deck, and swearing that, if he did not ‘ skull over the Witney,’ he would tear him into rope-yarns. Thus roughly treated, poor blackey bellowed out lustily for mercy, which brought down the first officer, who asked Jack Carter (for that was his name) what was the matter. He replied : ‘ This here black rascal has grappled my blanket, so I am just after boarding him ; and, if he don’t shore it out, I’ll sink him, or Jack Carter is no sailor.’ Here he commenced hammering his head against the deck,

until the knave said something to one of his countrymen, who ran forward where his canoe was, and put an end to the dispute by producing the Witney."

It was only after a voyage of more than five months that they entered the river Hoogly. The soldiers, sick of that perpetual prospect of "wandering fields of barren foam," eagerly feasted their eyes on the eastern beauties of the banks, and hailed with pleased astonishment the first glimpse of Calcutta. They gave three cheers as they passed Fort William, heartily welcomed from the ramparts by the men in garrison there. In a couple of hours, after letting go the anchor, they were ashore and lodged in their quarters at the fort.

Their fellows of the 10th regiment hastened to join the newcomers with bottles of rum, the soldier's best idea of friendliness, "and a scene ensued that was beyond description—drinking, singing, dancing, shouting, fighting, and bottles flying in all directions."

For his part, John marched off to the bazaar, went round the fort, and visited the sights, returning to barracks to find most of his comrades in a state of disgraceful drunkenness, lying like beasts on the floor, on cots, trunks, and boxes. Our young hero, though every inch a soldier, held such orgies in disgust and abhorrence. He never drank himself at this time in his life, and hated the very smell of arrack; many a night, he says, has he slept in the open air to get away from the fumes of this drink and the idiotic jargon of the drinkers. If all English soldiers in India had been as sensible as John Shipp, how many a life would have been saved, cut off in its prime by that habit which is the curse and the shame of our race!

V.

JOHN SHIPP was now eighteen years old, well-grown, healthy, eager to distinguish himself, and well satisfied with the trade he had chosen, in all respects but one. Like Hamlet, he lacked advancement. In spite of his experiences of campaigning in Caffreland, he was still reckoned only among the musical staff of the regiment, which did not please him. He did not like being called a drum-boy. He did not like flogging, for it was one of the duties of the drummers to perform upon

the hides of their comrades as well as on sheepskin. He did not like dancing attendance on a capricious sergeant-major and his even more consequential spouse, the queen of soldiers' wives in the regiment. His captain had been singularly kind, helping him to improve himself so much in reading and writing, that at the end of a year he was set to keep the books of the company as well as the officers' private accounts. To this patron John now addressed himself, with the modest petition that he might be promoted from the drummers to the rank of a full private. He had his wish—and more.

"In about a week after having made this request, I was transferred from the drummers' room, and promoted to the rank of corporal. This was promotion indeed—three steps in one day! From drum-boy to private; from a battalion company to the Light Bobs; and from private to corporal. I was not long before I paraded myself in the tailor's shop, and tipped the master-snip a rupee to give me a good and neat cut, such as became a full corporal. By evening parade my blushing honours came thick upon me. The captain came upon parade, and read aloud the regimental orders of the day, laying great stress upon 'to the rank of corporal, and to be obeyed accordingly.' I was on the right of the company, being the tallest man on parade, when I was desired by the captain to fall out, and give the time. I did so, and never did a fogleman cut more capers; but here an awkward accident happened. In shouldering arms, I elevated my left hand high in the air; extended my leg in an oblique direction, with the point of my toe just touching the ground; but, in throwing the musket up in a fogle-like manner, the cock caught the bottom of my jacket, and down came brown Bess flat upon my toes, to the great amusement of the tittering company. I must confess I felt queer; but I soon recovered my piece and my gravity, and all went on smoothly till I got into the barracks, where a quick hedge-firing commenced from all quarters, such as 'Shoulder *hems*!' 'Shoulder *hems*!' 'Twig the fogleman!' This file-firing increased to volleys, till I was obliged to exert my authority by threatening them with the guard-house for riotous conduct; but this only increased the merriment, so I pocketed the affront, as the easiest and most good-natured mode of escape; my persecutors ceased, and thus ended my first parade as a non-commissioned officer."

Thus clothed in a little, though a very little, brief authority, John felt himself the right man in the right place, and looked down with due pride upon all drum-boys and such like. Once on the road of promotion, he now made rapid progress. At the end of six months, he was advanced to be sergeant, and soon afterwards—thanks to his diligence in self-improvement—to the post of pay-sergeant. This was an office of no small importance and profit into the bargain ; for, as he tells us, the pay-sergeant was in the way of advancing the men money on *moderate* interest and the best security ; also of selling them watches and seals on credit “at a price *somewhat* above what they cost, to be sure, but the mere sight of which, dangling from a man’s fob, has been known to gain him the character of a sober, steady fellow, and one that should be set down for promotion.” Other pickings the pay-sergeant must have had on the money passing through his hands, yet without blame, in these days of jobbery ; so John had good reason to think himself well off, and was no doubt not a little envied by his comrades. A whipper-snapper like him, forsooth, who had been a monkey of a drum-boy six months before !

Shortly after he attained this dignity, part of his regiment was ordered to join the army in the field. The East India Company were then at their usual work of interfering in the quarrels of native potentates, and rewarding themselves for their aid to one or the other by an extension of territory, or at least of influence, which would sooner or later come to the same thing. The present war arose out of the jealousies of Scindiah and Holkar, two rival Mahratta chiefs. The English, having already beaten the former, had undertaken in turn to defend his interests against Holkar, and an army under Lord Lake was now campaigning in the north-west provinces, for which Shipp and his comrades got marching orders.

But while they were making preparations to start, a very unpleasant interruption occurred. On the arrival of troops at Fort William, it had been the custom to stop eight rupees from each soldier’s pay, for what purpose they were never told, and their officers, says Shipp, who ought to have known if anyone, were as much in the dark as themselves. Now that the two flank companies were going on active service, it seemed a fit time to demand some explanation of the stoppage, so the men marched to their general’s quarters and laid their complaint

before him. They were then informed that the eight rupees went to insure each man a decent burial. This explanation excited natural indignation—as if those who fell on the field were likely to get eight rupees-worth of burial! The men returned to their barracks; drink inflamed their resentment: and something like a mutiny broke out among the Grenadier and Light Companies—the detachment under orders to march. Both companies are stated to have been on good enough terms with their officers, who used all means of persuading them that violent measures would not be the way to get their wrongs redressed. Shipp's comrades allowed themselves to be won over by these counsels, and clamorously demanded to be marched before the enemy that they might wipe away the stigma of their first disobedience. But the Grenadiers were not so easily appeased. Their officers had again to be called in to quell them. The colonel was received with respectful silence; but when the adjutant appeared, who was extremely unpopular, the tumult burst forth again, and cries of "Kick him out!" "Turn him out!" resounded through the barracks. Shipp declares this officer had a narrow escape for his life.

The men, however, slept off their rage, and the officers seem to have sympathized with them, so far as to look over this outbreak. Next morning, indeed, the eight rupees were paid back. All thus having ended well, on the day after, the detachment left the fort, with the band of the regiment playing them through Calcutta, amid the farewell greetings of a crowd of spectators. "Every face smiled with joy; every breast beat high for glory."

Fairly on his way to meet the enemy, John was in the highest spirits, and beheld all this new country in the rosiest light. Peace and plenty seemed to reign among the natives, industrious and contented under the shield of English justice; the soldiers lived like fighting-cocks, thought nothing of five-and-twenty miles a day, were as happy as kings and a great deal merrier: such is his account of the march. When Lord Lake, with his staff, came out of the camp to meet them, and these Englishmen greeted each other with three hearty cheers, the pay-sergeant's dignity had almost broken down in the warmth of his patriotic emotion.

"I must confess I felt at this moment sensations I was a stranger to before—a kind of elevation of soul indescribable, accompanied by a consciousness that I could either have

laughed heartily or cried bitterly. Nearer camp we were met and greeted by nearly the whole European army. Such shouting and huzzaing I never heard, nor could I have imagined that the mind of man could be worked up to such a height of feeling. For myself, I could not help dropping a tear—for what, I cannot tell; but so it was. On reaching the general hospital, we saw many men without legs, some without arms, others with their heads tied up; and it was a most affecting sight to behold these poor wounded creatures waving their shattered stumps, and exerting their feeble frames, to greet us warmly as we passed along. The scene that followed would beggar description: drinking, dancing, shouting, that made the Byannah Pass echo again! Reader, believe me when I assure you that in those days I knew not, as I said before, the taste of spirituous liquors; consequently, I did not join in these bacchanalian orgies, but reconnoitred the camp, which, to my spirits, was far more exhilarating than the jovial cup. Three days restored us to some kind of order and discipline, and all went on smoothly."

Holkar and his allies were lying not far off with twenty-five thousand infantry, and a vast horde of Pindaree horse. The strength of these marauders lay in their excellent horsemanship; they could turn their steeds round fifty times in a circle, or pull them up instantaneously, while the heavy mounts of the English cavalry were in comparison as unmanageable as the huge galleons of the Spanish Armada. Shipp has often seen Lord Lake's bodyguard put a whole column of them to flight, but the difficulty was to come to close quarters with this provoking enemy. They lived in the field; their wives and children were as much at home on horseback as the men; they cared only for plunder, and constantly avoided an engagement unless they could fight at overwhelming odds. When the English army broke up its camp, they rode along the line of march, swarming about the flanks and firing a shot now and then "to let us know they wished to be neighbourly." Our troops had frequent skirmishes with their detached parties, and killed a few now and then by the fire of field-guns, but could never come up with them. For some time, General Lake lay in wait trying to surprise them; but an elephant might as well have tried to catch a weasel asleep. "The rattling of our swords might be heard a mile off." On the other hand it was easy to

trace them by the signs of devastation which they left behind everywhere ; fires by night and smoke by day guided the pursuers trying in vain to overtake Holkar's heroes.

Our young sergeant had a narrow escape from them one day.

"We were in column on one side of a field, near some high corn called juwar, about half a mile from our column on the other side of the field. I had at this time the fastest pony in India, called Apple, on which I rode on ahead to the extreme end of the field, to have a shot at the head of their line of march ; for which imprudence my own life was nearly the forfeit, for round the corner I came almost in contact with about a hundred of the enemy. I soon wheeled round, and galloped back again as fast as my pony could carry me ; they fired at me fifty or sixty shots, not one of which touched me. Ever after I kept a little more within bounds."

Tired of this sort of work, Lake's army at length attacked, and took from the Pindarees the town of Muttra, where the men had a fine haul of plunder. John was not idle, but on this occasion he honestly confesses to having got a fright. He found himself in a large Rajah's palace, and had managed to break his way into a room full of bales of silks and shawls. Just as he was in the act of walking off with one of the biggest bales, he saw fixed upon him a shining eye, set in one of the most hideous heads he had ever beheld. He hurried out rather precipitately, but, on reflection, felt ashamed of his fears and returned, sword in hand, to discover that the glaring eyes belonged to an idol, which he treated to a cut across the face "for taking up his quarters in that solitary place, and took the liberty of making free with all the silks and shawls under his protection."

Holkar having retired for a time, the army went into quarters at Cawnpore to revel in the produce of this short campaign. But they were soon on foot again, making forced marches towards Delhi, against which the enemy had appeared. On the approach of the English, Holkar made off, to fall in with a small detachment of native infantry, under Colonel Burn, also marching to the relief of Delhi. Here was a case in which the Pindarees did not shun an engagement, but Colonel Burn, fighting every inch of the way with his handful of men, made good his retreat to Shamlee, where he took possession of a small mud fort, and defended himself for six days against the

masses of the enemy. The main body, marching eighty-four miles in forty-eight hours, arrived just in time to the rescue of this brave little band. Then the besiegers, as usual, made off, marking their line of march by pillage and havoc. Lord Lake followed next day, but the Pindarees were far enough away by this time. He seems to have lost a day in letting the soldiers plunder Shamlee, as a punishment for some shots fired from its houses into Colonel Burn's fort. John Shipp passes lightly over these scenes of martial burglary, though he does not fail to reprobate the destruction worked by the half-savage foe. One would like to know whether the inoffensive natives had much choice between the hasty pillage of the flying Pindarees and the authorized plunder of the victorious British soldier.

"On our road we passed several villages that had been burned to the ground ; poor, naked, and plundered creatures, men, women, and children ; burning corn-fields, dead elephants, camels, horses, and bullocks ; and the road was strewn with moah-berry, on which they feed their horses for the purpose of making them drunk, in which state it is incredible the astonishing distance they will go, though you can count their ribs a mile off. The rear-guard of the enemy generally kept their eye on our advanced-guard, detaching parties on each of our flanks, and, by way of amusement, giving us occasionally a shot. I recollect, on one of these days' marches, a most impudent fellow, mounted on a beautiful horse and finely bedizened, came within two hundred yards of our column, passing upon us some unpleasant epithets, and once or twice firing his matchlock. He at last wounded a man of the native cavalry. This so annoyed me that I asked his lordship if he would permit me to attack him. His answer was, 'Oh, never mind him, Shipp : we will catch him before he is a week older.' I never in my life felt more inclined to disobey orders, for he was still capering close by us. An officer commanding one of the six-pounders came up at the same time, and told his lordship that, if he would permit him, he would knock him over the first shot, or lose his commission. His lordship said, 'Well, try.' At this moment the fellow fired his matchlock again, and immediately commenced reloading his piece. Our gun was unlimbered, laid, and fired ; the ball, striking the horse's rump, passed through the man's back and the poor animal's neck, and we said, 'So much for the Pin !'"

At last, by a night march of twenty-eight miles, Lord Lake succeeded in surprising Holkar at Furruckabad. Though, in the haste of the advance, an ammunition tumbrel accidentally blew up within half a mile of the enemy, thousands of them were found still asleep, exhausted by their own rapid retreat, and stupefied by the opium which was their pet vice, as drink is that of the English soldier. Cunning as the Pindarees were, they kept bad watch, like the Red Indians and other undisciplined warriors. When daylight dawned, they found themselves attacked on all sides; and many were killed in their sleep. The battle was a mere carnage; these formidable horsemen fled with such precipitation, that they halted only seventy-two miles from the field. The English lost no more than two men killed and twenty wounded.

A few days before, Holkar's infantry also had been defeated by General Fraser, with a few thousand men in all, mostly native sepoys. On learning this disaster, the Mahratta chief shifted his course towards Bhurtpore, the Rajah of which was treacherously scheming to join him. Before following, Lord Lake resolved to attack this Rajah's town of Deig, which had fired upon Fraser's troops during the battle. The siege was opened in the middle of December, 1804, and our hero has more than one adventure to recall from it.

"The two companies to which I belonged led the column, carrying tools for working. The night was as dark as pitch, and bitterly cold. Secrecy was the great object of our mission, and we slowly approached the vicinity of the fort, steering our course towards a small village about eight hundred yards from the spot, where we halted under shelter from their guns. This village had been set on fire two days before, and its inmates compelled to take shelter in the fort. Small parties were despatched in search of eligible ground for trenches, and within breaking-distance. I was despatched alone through the desolate village, to see what was on the other side. I was yet but a novice in soldiering; and believe me, reader, I had no great fancy for this job; but an order could not be disobeyed, so off I marched, my ears extended wide to catch the most distant sound. I struck into a wide street, and, marching on tiptoe, passed two or three poor solitary bullocks, who were dying for want of food. These startled me for the moment, but not another creature could I see. I at one time thought I heard

voices, and that I could see a blue-light burning on the fort, from which I inferred that I was getting pretty close to it. Just as I had made up my mind that this must be the case, I distinctly heard a voice calling out, '*Khon hie ?*' (in English, 'Who is there ?') I was riveted to the spot, and could not move till the words were repeated, when I stole behind one of the wings of a hut close on my right. Soon after, I heard the same man say, '*Quoi tah mea ne deckah ;*' which is, 'I am sure I saw somebody.' Another voice answered, '*Guddah, hogah ;*' which signifies, 'A jackass, I suppose ;' for there were several wandering about. I fully agreed with the gentleman who spoke last, but was determined to throw off the appellation as quickly as possible, by endeavouring to find my way back. In attempting to make my retreat with as little noise as possible, I put my foot into some fire. This compelled me to withdraw rather precipitately, and they heard me, when one of them said, '*Hi quoi,*' which is, 'There certainly is somebody.' The other replied, '*Kis wastah nay tuckee currah ?*' ('Why don't you ascertain it, then ?') Hearing this, I dashed into another hut, and squatted myself down close, resolved at least to have a fight for it. A man passed the door of the hut twice ; but at last, crying out, '*Cally ek lungrah bile hie,*' which signifies, 'There is only one lame bullock,' he rejoined his party. The attempt to steal away in so dark a night would have been impracticable ; I must infallibly have been heard. I resolved, therefore, to have a run for it, and off I bolted, up the same street through which I had come, when a whole volley of matchlocks was sent after me, but they did not attempt to follow—at least, as far as I know, for I did not stop to look behind me. I arrived safe at the division, not a little frightened ; and I can venture to say that (the elephant affair excepted), I never ran so fast before in my life. This afterwards proved to be a strong cavalry piquet."

This village was taken possession of, and a rising-ground near it turned to account for the attack. Here, in a single night, the English soldiers entrenched themselves and threw up their batteries. They were so close to the enemy's works, that they could hear them speaking, and believed themselves able to distinguish the voice of an English deserter. On Christmas-eve, the breach being reported practicable, an assault was ordered. It was a dark, cold night ; the rising of the moon was to be the signal for advancing to the storm.

"She did rise, in splendid effulgence, over one of the highest bastions of the fort we were about to storm ; and we could see, by her light, spears on the ramparts as thick as plants in a new-set forest. We were now and then saluted with a solitary gun from the fort, to let us know they were not asleep ; blue-lights were seen burning on their ramparts, and they occasionally indulged us with a rocket or two, which played beautifully in the air.

"The soldiers, seeing I was a spirited youth, and a competitor with them for glory, gave me a few salutary hints, especially an 'old veteran' of the 76th Foot, who had been then fighting about twenty years in the East. Among the hints he gave me were these : 1st. Never to pass a man lying down, or supposed to be dead, without giving him the point of the bayonet or sword ; for it was a common trick of theirs to lay themselves down on your approach, and then to watch the opportunity of cutting *you* down. 2nd. Whenever I saw a rocket, or shell, fall near me, to get as close to it as possible, and lay myself flat on my face. This was undoubtedly very excellent advice ; but I soon got tired of killing dead men, and lying down every time I saw a rocket ; the having neglected to do which, on one occasion, however, nearly cost me my life."

The storming party was composed of about seven hundred men, Europeans and natives, under the command of Colonel Ball, "a brave old hero, but so feeble that he was obliged to be pushed up the track of glory." The two flank companies of Shipp's regiment headed the column. Sergeant Bury, of the Grenadiers, was to lead the way, but being wounded at the outset, he had to retire for a time, and John volunteered for this post of honour.

There was honour and danger enough. Between the batteries and the breach, the enemy had thrown up an intrenchment so as to bring a cross fire to bear upon the assailants, who were soon in the thick of it. Fortunately, the guns of the fort were pointed too high, and most of the shots passed over their heads, as they were fighting their way through the intrenchments. Here, Captain Lindsay, of the Light Company, was twice wounded, but would not turn back. John himself was nearly done for so early in the fray. With three or four of his comrades he had turned aside to spike a gun, and was in the act of feeling for the touch-hole, when it went off, and the con-

cussion threw him on his back into the trench, where the swarthy artilleryman who had made shift to fire it in the *mêlée* would have cut him to pieces, if a grenadier had not shot the fellow down.

Regaining his feet, our sergeant pressed on under a fire which, if properly directed, must have annihilated the whole party. Fifty or sixty paces from the breach he was again knocked over and stunned by a matchlock ball in the head. When he came to himself a little, he was borne on in the throng of men, running in a stooping posture, to avoid the balls which hailed down upon them, along with stones, logs, stink-pots, bundles of burning straw, spears, cold shot and other missiles of a desperate enemy. The wonder is how any man could pass alive through such a deadly storm. But on they went, and at last planted the British flag upon the summit of the breach.

The work, however, was not yet over. They had gained the walls, but the fort was full of narrow streets, still occupied by the defenders, who kept up their resistance from loopholed houses. It was necessary to take these streets, one by one, defended as they were by guns, here and there raking their whole length; and the fight became one of confused and indecisive encounters, though the English tried to keep together, afraid of firing on one another in the narrow intricacies of the place. At one time, Sergeant Shipp helped to rescue his captain, exhausted by wounds, and on the point of being overpowered by five or six natives. "At midnight I again met Captain Lindsay clearing one of the streets, when he asked me how I felt myself. I complained of a wound in my side, but said that I could find no hole; but this was not a time for talking." Then John made a prize. In one of the larger streets his party encountered a body of the enemy escorting some person of rank in an open palanquin. They soon stopped this procession, and set to poking into the palanquin with their bayonets, whereupon the occupant, "a tremendous fat Zemindar, roared out most lustily, and began to show fight." He fired a matchlock, the ball of which went through John's coat; so when this great man and his attendants had been disposed of, our hero thought himself entitled to take possession of the gun that had so nearly cost him his life. It was a curious weapon, a barrel about two feet long, with a round handle, having at

one end a hatchet, at the other a hook. This instrument he would have presented to the commander-in-chief, who refused the gift, but bought it of him for two hundred rupees.

About three o'clock in the morning, completely tired out, as he well might be, John rested under the gable-end of a building, and began to take stock of his injuries. The supposed wound on his side puzzled rather than alarmed him. There was a black swollen mark, edged with red streaks, which could only be explained as caused by the wind of a cannon-ball that must have passed between his arm and his body without his noticing it in the excitement of the fight. The wound in the head was a more serious one, and after being so long exposed to the night air, it gave the doctors reason to shake their heads when they came to examine him; but with youth and a good constitution on his side, he soon began to get over it.

The slaughter among the enemy was great, but thanks, no doubt, to their clumsy arms, the English had many wounded, yet few killed in proportion. Five companies of Sepoys which had recently deserted in a body from the British service, were found drawn up outside of the fort, with ordered arms, making no show of fight, and crying out, "Englishmen, Englishmen, pray do not kill us; for God's sake do not kill us!" But little mercy was shown to their fears rather than their penitence. Orders had been given to grant them no quarter, and most of them were shot.

Such was our hero's first, though by no means his last, experience of a storm, the most thrilling and deadly ordeal of modern warfare. The fort he had helped to take formed only an outwork of the town and the main fortifications, which, however, the enemy now gave up, without waiting for further proof of English valour.

VI.

LORD LAKE's next step was to lay siege to Bhurtpore, a formidable fortification, eight miles in circumference, enclosed by a wide deep moat and walls of earth interwoven with the trunks of enormous trees. It was scientifically fortified, and the guns were served by French artillerymen or natives trained by them. Besides the garrison within, Holkar's host of cavalry lay under the walls, committing every cruelty upon such unfortunate stragglers as fell into their hands. An Indian army is attended

by an immense tail of followers—grooms, grass-cutters, sutlers, jugglers,* and so on; and many of these people would from day to day be sent back into the English camp with their noses, ears, or hands cut off.

Such notable work being on hand, John Shipp felt obliged to "nurse himself a little," that he might not lose the chance of taking part in it. His ambition this time was nothing less than to lead the forlorn hope; and the general accepted his offer, with the promise of a commission if he should escape the perilous ordeal. The youth's idea of "nursing himself" seems peculiar. A few days after being nearly killed at Deig we find him lounging about among the advanced piquets before Bhurtpore, watching with keen professional interest the preparations for the siege and the continual skirmishes with Holkar's cavalry. He tells us how he had nearly paid dear for this amusement of an invalid. He had ridden forward to try to get a shot at "a fellow who was showing off his horsemanship," when all at once he became aware that his fast pony had carried him a long way in advance of the piquets, and several Pindarees were cutting off his retreat, with the most mischievous intentions. There was nothing for it but to dash through them. Luckily for him, his comrades, observing the state of affairs, and having a six-pounder handy, fired a long shot at the Pindarees, which fell close to the party, covering them with dust, whereupon John took advantage of their consternation to make his way safe back, and "never ventured so far from home again." After such a tonic experience, he seems to have considered himself quite convalescent.

"On the 1st day of January, 1805, we broke ground against this strong fortress and town. I was again on the working party, my wound being nearly closed. We halted near a wood,

* "It will appear scarcely credible to the general reader, when he is informed that to every fighting-man in an Indian army, there are at least ten camp-followers. The majority of these live by plundering the adjacent villages round the camp and on the march; robbing every hut and field within ten miles round. There is no possibility of checking them, or preventing these abuses. Amongst these fellows are thieves of every description, and the most notorious are jugglers. They commence their nocturnal pilferings in a state of nudity, oiling themselves all over to prevent their being held if caught; they then creep on their hands and feet like dogs, and frequently imitate them in barking and howling, as well as most other animals, more particularly goats, sheep, and asses."—*Shipp's Memoirs*.

and a party having been sent on to reconnoitre, we at last pitched upon a place, and commenced our nocturnal labours. We had not been at work ten minutes, when they heard our working-tools, and commenced a most terrific cannonade. We were ordered to desist, and to lie down behind the earth we had thrown up, which, fortunately for us, was of a sufficient thickness to be musket-ball proof, or we must have suffered dreadfully, for their little rough iron balls flew about as thick as bees. The cannon-shot were generally high: some that fell short, rolled, and were brought up by our little mound of defence. They kept it up gloriously for half an hour, conceiving that we intended to take them by surprise; but, from the reports of this fortress containing 100,000 soldiers, and the enormous sum of nineteen crore of rupees, our orders were to approach it by a regular siege. I fear I shall be thought rather tedious in relating the disastrous events at this place; but we must take the gall with the honey. The firing having ceased, except at intervals, we recommenced our labours; and glad indeed were we to set blood again on the move. The night was bitterly cold, and the ground damp; but we kept ourselves in exercise with our work, and by daylight we had completed our trenches and four-gun breaching battery within five hundred yards of the town wall. The moment the day dawned, our night's work was observed. The fort was again in a blaze, flags were hoisted, the parapet of the town wall was one general mass of spears and little flags, as far as the eye could reach; and the heads of soldiers studded the ramparts with variegated colours—their turbans being generally of the most prominent dyes—red, yellow, and pink. Such shouting, roaring of cannon, whistling of shot, grumbling of rockets, and waving of flags and spears, made me reflect for a moment on the folly of having ever sold my 'leathers' to participate in such a scene; but this thought was soon buried in the shouts of defiance from our trenches. We did not show hands, as we had none to spare; but as we were of course anxious to see what kind of a place this said Bhurtpore was, we took every opportunity of peeping, whenever we saw a gun fired, crying out 'Shot,' which was a signal to bob our heads. On the firing subsiding in the slightest degree, we continued our work, and at length completed our batteries and magazines, and widened our trenches to seven feet, leaving just sufficient room to pass and repass, so as to

communicate with our principal dépôt under shelter. During the whole of this day the enemy kept up an almost incessant fire, both with great guns and small arms, and we had some few men wounded. A soldier of the Light Company, named Murphy, stood upon the bank, exposing himself and drawing upon us the fire from the fort. Some of us remonstrated with him on his imprudence, when Paddy coolly replied: 'Never fear, honey; sure I have got my eye on them; and, if they kill me, bad luck to me if I don't be after paying them for it when I get into that same fort.' In the course of the day he was shot in the finger for his disregard of our advice, which, he said, was 'just because he was looking another way at the time.' "

After getting their guns into position, the English spent the night quietly, while the enemy never ceased blazing away at random, burning blue-lights now and then to show they were on the watch, and keeping up a great din of barbarous music as accompaniment to their guns, which, from the roughness of the balls, made more noise than was in proportion to the damage done by them. The Mussulmans were in the habit of making a night of it with opium and such-like dissipations, which must have left them not very fit for duty next morning, as Shipp remarks. But as soon as dawn came, "we threw a little further light upon the subject, by opening our breaching-party with a salvo, accompanied with such terrific cheering and shouting, as seemed to startle the new-risen sun, which at that identical moment peeped from behind its golden curtains to see what was the matter. The enemy, after a moment's pause, were seen in a tremendous bustle, mustering their full force; and their heads were so thick that, had our shelling-battery been ready, we might have made dreadful havoc among the motley group. They shouted, yelled, screamed, groaned; small arms whistled, cannons roared, and in an instant the fort was enveloped in smoke. It was altogether a most terrific scene. At this moment a soldier called out, 'Shipp, have you made your will?' I said 'Yes; which is, that I will lead you into that fort undaunted, for all their smoke and rattle.' 'Well done, Jack!' said one. 'That's a hearty!' said another; and many a joke followed: but, to confess the truth, I thought it no joking matter, but wished most earnestly that I could say with Macbeth, '*I have done the deed.*' "

The occupations of the siege, however, gave him little time

for reflection on the hazard he had undertaken. He meant to do all that in him lay to win honour, and if he was to die, how could he die better than for his king and country? It was the most sensible course for him to think no more about it till the time came for action. In the meanwhile his fingers itched to be at the bold Pindarees, who kept showing themselves within a quarter of a mile of the piquets; but his recent escape was a warning against rash attempts, if he would live to lead the forlorn hope. His comrades, too, were furious at these miscreants, when some score of wretched grass-cutters came back into camp horribly mutilated, having disobeyed the orders against venturing out unprotected.

The siege operations went actively on, but the balls made little impression on these mud fortifications. Many of them scarcely buried themselves in the face of the walls; others rolled harmlessly off, and were fired back from the enemy's guns; while the crust of earth that was knocked off formed about the breach a treacherous soil, in which the stormers would sink up to their necks and flounder about, unable to find footing. As Shipp says, it is very difficult to make a practicable breach in a place built of such materials.

Howitzers and mortars were brought into play, which not a little discomposed the enemy, though in these days one shell in five minutes was thought smart work. Even at this rate houses were frequently on fire within the town, and several small explosions took place, each greeted with cheers from the besiegers. One day the treacherous Rajah was seen on the walls reconnoitring with a spy-glass. He was treated to the compliment of a shell, which made his Highness and suite disappear with great rapidity. In return the garrison laboriously got ready an enormous seventy-two pounder, which went off at last with a report like an earthquake. Luckily, however, it was so big that they could not repress its muzzle enough to bring it to bear on the batteries, and the shots went far over the heads of the English, who, finding that it did no harm beyond kicking up a great deal of dust, christened it *Civil Tom*. Then the enemy thought of turning it towards the camp, and actually threw a ball close to Lord Lake's tent, "more than two miles from the fort," as Shipp records with admiration. But the only real mischief *Civil Tom* ever did was killing a water-carrier's bullock and carrying away the poor man's right arm.

"We now began to grow impatient to see what was inside this boasting fort, for we had pretty well seen what was outside." The breach soon looked promising; and the fire of the besiegers was kept up night and day, to prevent the garrison from setting to rights what they took so much trouble in destroying. One night Shipp heard the engineer say to the captain of the battery, that next evening would be time to end the matter. "The next evening!" muttered he to himself, who was so much concerned in this news. The captain turned round, asking him how he liked it, to which John replied: "I wish it was this night, sir." The sooner it could be over the better. He quite endorses Shakespeare's account of the unpleasant interval

"Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first motion."

At this point, indeed, John gives us some very honest and sensible reflections on courage. Nobody can accuse him of wanting this essential quality of a soldier; but he is no braggart. He does not believe the loud talkers who declare that they would as soon fight as eat their breakfast, and he has as little patience with those who try to fill themselves with short-lived fury by going into action half drunk. All this is humbug in his opinion: the truly brave man knows well enough what the danger is that he will face unshrinkingly at the call of duty. If these swash-buckling fire-eaters are really so fond of fighting for its own sake, he asks, how do they come, in spite of themselves, to appear so serious and anxious before entering upon some desperate undertaking like a storm? It was his own practice on such occasions to retire from the riotous company of his comrades to some solitary spot, for the purpose of strengthening himself by meditation and prayer; and he tells us how more than once he has come upon some boasting or profane fellow that had slunk apart also to supplicate the merciful aid of Him whose name on his lips had so often been taken in vain.

In short, the young sergeant concludes, no sane man likes to part with his life if he can possibly help it; and only a fool thinks lightly, in cold blood, over the terrible chances of a coming carnage. Once in action it is another matter. "In these moments there is an indescribable elation of the spirits:

the soul rises above its wonted serenity into a kind of frenzied apathy to the scene before you, a heroism bordering on ferocity ; the nerves become tight and contracted ; the eye full and open, moving quickly in its socket with almost maniac wildness ; the head is in constant motion ; the nostril extended wide ; and the mouth apparently gasping. If an artist could truly delineate the features of a soldier in the battle's heat, and compare them with the lineaments of the same man in the peaceful calm of domestic life, they would be found to be two different portraits."

A vein of religious sentiment and reflection now appears as a feature in our hero's character, which he gratefully professes to owe, with much else, to the influence of his kind patron, Captain Lindsay, "one of the best and most pious of men." Thus we find John Shipp, the ex-drum boy, agreeing in spirit with the learned George Herbert :

"A sad wise valour is the brave complexion ;
That leads the van and swallows up the cities.
The giggler is a milkmaid, whom infection
Or a fired beacon frighteth from his ditties.
Then he's the sport : the mirth then in him rests,
And the sad * man is cock of all his jests."

On the night before the storm the two flank companies of the 22nd, which seem to have been honoured with more than their fair share in such matters, were relieved from duty that they might take a good rest, and prepare themselves for the work of the morrow. John slept soundly as usual ; then early in the morning was up cleaning and new flinting his musket, and sharpening his bayonet for use upon the cotton stuffed coats of the Mussulmans, which experience had taught him to be so thick as to serve for a kind of armour. In the course of the day he strolled down to the front to take a look at the road on which that night he was to lead his comrades. The English batteries continued to pound away at the breach, which looked promising enough from the distance. Nobody had more interest in making these observations than the destined leader of the forlorn hope, whose heart was undismayed ; and he only wished the time had come—as it came at length. Great secrecy had been observed : no general orders for the attack were published, but the arrangements privately made

* This word then implied *serious, sober*.

with the officers and men concerned ; so there appeared not any stir or bustle in the camp till evening gun-fire, at eight o'clock, which was the signal to be on the move. Shipp, for one, knew well that he might never come back.

"I kissed and took leave of my favourite pony, Apple, and dog, Wolf, and I went to my post at the head of the column, with my little band of heroes, twelve volunteers from the different corps of the army. Reader, you may believe me when I assure you that, at this critical juncture, everything else was forgotten in the enthusiasm of the moment, except the contemplation of the honourable post confided to me. 'What !' thought I, 'I, a youth, at the head of an Indian army !' I began to think it presumption, when so many more experienced soldiers filled the ranks behind. I thought that every eye was upon me, and I did not regret the pitchy darkness of the night, which hid my blushing countenance. All was still as the grave, when I distinctly heard somebody call, 'Sergeant Shipp !' This was Lieutenant-Colonel Salkeld, adjutant-general of the army, who brought with him a gollandauze, who had deserted from the fort, and who for filthy lucre was willing to betray his countrymen. This man was handed over to me, he having undertaken to lead me to the breach. If he attempted to deceive me, or to run from me, I had positive orders to shoot him ; consequently, I kept a sharp look-out on him. We then, in solemn silence, marched down to the trenches, and remained there about half an hour, when we marched to the attack in open columns of sections—the two flank companies of the 22nd leading, supported by the 75th and 76th European Regiments, and other Native infantry. I took the precaution of tying a rope round the wrist of my guide, that he might not escape ; for firing at him at that moment would have alarmed the fort. Not a word was to be heard ; but the cannon's rattling drowned many a deep-drawn sigh, from many as brave a heart.

"I was well supported, having my own two companies behind me. Colonel Maitland, of his Majesty's 76th Regiment, commanded this storming-party, and brave little Major Archibald Campbell his corps. The former officer came in front to me, and pointed out the road to glory ; but, observing the native whom I had in charge, he asked who he was, and, on being informed, said, 'We can find the way without him ; let him go

about his business.' I remonstrated, and repeated to him the instructions I had received ; but his answer was, ' I don't care ; if you don't obey my orders, I will send you to the rear.*' I did obey, and on we moved to the attack. Immediately behind me were pioneers, carrying gabions and fascines to fill up any cavities we might meet with. The enemy did not discover our approach till within fifty paces of the ditch, when a tremendous cannonade and peals of musketry commenced ; rockets were flying in all directions, blue lights were hoisted, and the fort seemed convulsed to its very foundation. Its ramparts seemed like some great volcano vomiting tremendous volumes of fiery matter ; the roaring of the great guns shook the earth beneath our feet ; their small arms seemed like the rolling of ten thousand drums ; and their war-trumpets rent the air asunder. Men were seen skipping along the lighted ramparts, as busy as emmets collecting stores for the dreary days of winter. The scene was awfully grand, and must have been sublimely beautiful to the distant spectator.

" We pushed on at speed ; but were soon obliged to halt. A ditch, about twenty yards wide, and four or five deep, branched off from the main trench. This ditch formed a small island, on which were posted a strong party of the enemy, with two guns. Their fire was well directed, and the front of our column suffered severely. The fascines and gabions were thrown in ; but they were as a drop of water in the mighty deep : the fire became hotter, and my little band of heroes plunged into the water, followed by our two companies and part of the 75th Regiment. The middle of the column broke off, and got too far down to the left ; but we soon cleared the little island. At this time Colonel Maitland and Major Campbell joined me, with our brave officers of the two companies and many of the other corps. I proposed following the fugitives ; but our duty was to gain the breach, our orders being confined to that object. We did gain it ; but imagine our surprise and consternation when we found a perpendicular curtain going down to the water's edge, and no footing, except on pieces of trees and stones that had fallen from above. This could not bear more than three men abreast, and if they slipped (which many did), a watery grave awaited them, for the water was extremely deep

* It is stated that this want of trust in the guide was among the main causes of the ensuing failure.

here. Close on our right was a large bastion, which the enemy had judiciously hung with dead underwood. This was fired, and it threw such a light upon the breach, that it was as clear as noonday. They soon got guns to bear on us, and the first shot (which was grape) shot Colonel Maitland dead, wounded Major Campbell in the hip or leg, me in the right shoulder, and completely cleared the remaining few of my little party. We had at that moment reached the top of the breach, not more (as I before stated) than three abreast, when we found that the enemy had completely repaired that part by driving in large pieces of wood, stakes, stones, bushes, and pointed bamboos, through the crevices of which was a mass of spears jobbing diagonally, which seemed to move by mechanism. Such was the footing we had, that it was utterly impossible to approach these formidable weapons; meantime, small spears or darts were hurled at us; and stones, lumps of wood, stink-pots, and bundles of lighted straw, thrown upon us. In the midst of this tumult, I got one of my legs through a hole, so that I could see into the interior of the fort. The people were like a swarm of bees. In a moment I felt something seize my foot; I pulled with all my might, and at last succeeded in disengaging my leg, but leaving my boot behind me.

"Our establishing ourselves on this breach in sufficient force to dislodge this mass of spearmen, was physically impossible. Our poor fellows were mowed down like corn-fields, without the slightest hope of success. The rear of the column suffered much, as they were within range of the enemy's shot. A retreat was ordered, and we were again obliged to take to the water, and many a poor wounded soldier lost his life in this attempt. Not one of our officers escaped without being wounded, and Lieutenant Creswell was almost cut to pieces. We, as may be supposed, returned almost broken-hearted at this our first failure in India. Our loss was a melancholy one, and the conviction that the poor wounded fellows we were compelled to leave behind would be barbarously massacred, incited our brave boys to beg a second attempt. This was denied: had it been granted, it must infallibly have proved abortive; for there was, literally, *no breach*. The disastrous issue of our attack caused the enemy to exult exceedingly; and the shouting and roaring that followed our retreat were daggers in the souls of our wounded and disappointed soldiers, who were with difficulty



THE 75TH ON THE BREACH AT BHURTPORE.

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restrained from again rushing to the breach. I found that I had received a spear-wound in the right finger, and several little scratches from the combustibles they fired at us. Pieces of copper coin, as well as of iron, stone, and glass, were extracted from the wounds of those who were fortunate enough to escape. We were, in the course of the night, relieved, and went to our lines to brood over our misfortunes."

Thus ended the first attempt to storm Bhurtpore. The only consolation of the soldiers was the flattering manner in which daring was duly recognised by the orders of the day. The chief engineer, finding this spot impracticable, decided on shifting the attack further eastwards, where the difficulties to be encountered seemed less formidable. Fresh batteries had to be thrown up, and the heavy guns, injured by constant firing, were sent to the artillery park to be set right. In the meanwhile, Lord Lake turned this period of enforced leisure to account by disturbing Holkar in his position under the walls. Creeping through the high trees and jungle—not without drawing upon themselves a heavy fire from the fortifications—a body of infantry, so to speak, stalked and started the game; then our cavalry soon scattered the Pindarees with great loss. Holkar's best elephant was taken, along with some camels charged with treasure, and there was a good booty of spears, matchlocks, colours, and so forth. After this routing, however, part of the Pindarees soon returned to their old ground, showing themselves, indeed, more impudent than ever in hovering round the English piquets to draw off attention from the movements of their main body, which had gone to intercept a small detachment on the march from Muttra. Lord Lake being informed of this through his spies, three regiments of dragoons were sent off in haste, and once more gave Holkar a good beating. It was reported that the great Mahratta chief had been killed in this action, and several heads were brought into camp by natives, seeking the reward that had been offered for his; but none of them succeeded in imposing upon the English general, though some had taken the trouble of producing heads without an eye, to answer the description of the one-eyed Holkar.

The breaching guns were soon in position again, and preparations on foot for another assault. We might suppose that John Shipp had had enough of such work. His hurt finger

did not trouble him much, but the wound on his shoulder having injured the bone, was extremely painful, while the old one on his head had opened afresh, in all enough to prostrate a strong man, when added to the dejection caused by the failure of his former efforts. He had good excuse for lying quiet in hospital. But not a bit of it! His hurts were healing, and his appetite for glory was as great as ever; so again he volunteered to lead the forlorn hope, trusting this time to be more successful. As a preliminary to the second attack, a gallant deed is recorded of two sepoy who rode hotly towards the walls, with English soldiers pretending to pursue them, as if they had been deserters; but it was only a ruse for these two men to examine the state of the breach, which done, they galloped back unhurt, under a hot fire from the garrison.

"Two o'clock in the afternoon of the 20th of January, 1805, was arranged for the second storming of Bhurtpore. To prevent any obstruction by the trench, which was supposed to be at this part deep and wide, a bridge of bamboos was made that would admit of three file abreast. This bridge could be thrown a considerable distance by a hundred men, and was supported by ghee dubbahs (skins), in which the natives keep oil and butter for exportation, which when dried are light, and will bear a considerable weight before you can sink them. Elephants and camels were also laden with tents, and hackeries (or carts drawn by bullocks) with bales of cotton, all to fill up the ditch, to enable us to cross to the breach.

"I once more took my station with my twelve volunteers, supported by my two companies as before. A shell from one of the howitzers was a signal to move. On this signal being given, the shell, bursting in the muzzle of the gun or mortar, killed two of our grenadiers—a sad beginning. The bridge followed the forlorn hope, carried on men's shoulders, and must have appeared some extraordinary monster to those who were not acquainted with its intended use. We moved on, and before I got half-way down to the fort, six of my men were killed or wounded. The enemy, no doubt encouraged by our late defeat, had redoubled their fire, both in guns and men; and on the right side of the breach they had thrown out an underwork, which was filled with matchlock-men, and in which they had several guns. My men kept falling off one by one; and when I arrived at the edge of the ditch, which appeared

wide and deep, and was assisting the men with the bridge, I received a matchlock-ball which entered over the right eye and passed out over the left. This tumbled me, my forehead literally hanging over my nose, and the wound bleeding profusely. I was at this time close to our gallant Captain Lindsay, who, at the same moment, received a ginjall-ball* in the right knee, which shattered the bone to pieces. I recovered a little from the stun of my wound, when the first thing that met my eye (for I could only see with one) was the bamboo bridge quietly gliding down the stream, being some yards too short. Nothing but killed and wounded could be seen, and there was not the most distant chance of getting it. To have attempted crossing the ditch would have been an act of madness. In descending we must have plunged over our heads in water, and they had two small guns bearing on the spot. At last a retreat was ordered. Previous to this, our poor fellows stood like sheep to be shot at, without the remotest hope of success. The camels and elephants, alarmed by the tremendous firing and shouting, could not be induced to approach the fort, many of them throwing their loads and running back to camp, and wild into the woods. Seven hundred men were killed and wounded on this occasion. Our brave Captain Lindsay's wound was so bad that his leg was amputated in the battery. My wound was a dangerous one, having touched the bone. I was immediately sent home to camp, where I lay completely blind for several days. This, added to our disastrous defeat, threw me into a fever, and nearly cost me my life ; but, with the aid of a kind Providence, and the advantage of a strong and unimpaired constitution, I soon recovered."

"Once more remove," was now the word. The engineers gave up this side of the place as hopeless, and directed their attack against a prominent bastion more to the eastward. The English soldiers had been quite disheartened by these failures ; when he was able to go about again, Shipp found it truly distressing to enter the tents where nothing but gloomy faces were to be seen, instead of the careless mirth that had been wont to prevail. The men were always talking about their mutilated comrades left behind in that deadly breach ; and to add to their mortification, they saw the Mussulmans strutting daily upon the ramparts

* This is a long matchlock, which moves on a pivot and carries about a two-pound ball.

dressed in the uniforms of these poor fellows, and making an insulting parade of their arms. The loss had been very heavy; nearly half of the flank companies of the 22nd had fallen in the two assaults. Yet this little band was next time found still ready to advance, when other regiments shrank from the fiery ordeal. It was at one of these attacks that an officer is said to have cried, "*Go on!*" "There is no such word in the articles of war," answered a soldier; "lead on, and we follow you!"

A month went by, and the men recovered their spirits to some extent, and were eager to avenge themselves for the former defeats. The breached bastion grew ready for another assault. Then, on the very day appointed for this attempt, the enemy came to meet it with what may be called a homœopathic mode of treatment. Some four hundred men suddenly sallied out from the walls, and rushed upon the trenches just as the troops on duty were being relieved. They actually had possession of the English works for a short time, but were soon driven out, fighting desperately, and mowed down by the battery guns, which they had neglected to spike, while their own friends from the walls poured an indiscriminate fire upon the whole scene of the fight, giving reason to believe that these must be "a set of vagabonds they wished to get rid of." Anyhow, very few of them escaped. John Shipp is proud to say that their wounded were sent to the native hospitals, and treated with every kindness.

This affair being settled, the storming-party was ordered for twelve o'clock. Our hero desires us to imagine his disappointment when the doctor positively forbade him to take part in it. "I could have thrown what few brains I had in his face, but I was obliged to obey." He had to content himself with looking on from a short distance from the scene of action, while his place as leader of the forlorn hope was taken by "Lieutenant Templar* of the 76th, as brave a little fellow as ever wore a red coat." It would have been better for him, he thinks, to have been in the thick of it, since in spirit he fought as hard as anyone engaged. A terrible sight it was for him and the other spectators to see the British troops once more repulsed

* This officer's name is given as *Templeton* in another account of the siege. There are several slight inaccuracies in Shipp's story of the siege, which have been corrected only when they seem to be of consequence.

with the loss of hundreds of men. “Footing they had none: they literally hung on the bosom of the bastion;” and they only gained the top of the breach to be swept down by a murderous fire.

In spite of this fresh disaster, another attempt was ordered for the following day. Now, Shipp was not to be kept out of it. He had an excruciating headache, and his wound on the brow was still a frightful sight; but he assured the doctors he felt quite well, and begged them not to stand between him and glory. At two o'clock he was at his old post of honour, which this time he had to share with Lieutenant Templer. Taking his young comrade's hand, the brave little officer said with a smile: “Shipp, I am come to rob you of part of your glory; you are a regular monopolist of that commodity.” He carried a Union Jack, which he vowed he would plant on the bastion, or die in the attempt. He did both.

“The storming-party marched out in the usual steady order; yet, from our recent calamitous defeats, there was not that spirit amongst the men which I had witnessed on former occasions. We had already experienced three disastrous repulses from this fort, and there now seemed a cloud on every brow, which proceeded, I have no hesitation in asserting, from a well-grounded apprehension that this, our fourth assault, would be concluded by another retreat. If any sight could be exhibited to the human eye that was calculated to work upon the feelings of men already disappointed and dispirited, it was the scene that was exposed to our view on approaching to this breach; for there lay our poor comrades who had fallen in previous attempts, many of them in a state of nudity, some without heads, some without arms or legs, and others whose bodies exhibited the most barbarous cruelties, for they were literally cut to pieces. The sight was truly awful and appalling, and the eye of pity closed instinctively on such a spectacle of woe. Those who attempted to extend the hand of relief were added to the number of the slain, as the spot was much exposed to a cross-fire from the fort. Could any sight be more distressing for affectionate comrades to look on? I say affectionate, for, among men living together in one barrack, and, perhaps, under one tent, in familiar intercourse, there must be a greater regard for each other than is found to subsist among those who meet casually, once a day or once a week. In a soldier's barrack the

peculiarities, good or bad, of every individual are known; added to which, arduous services will always link men together in the bond of union and affection. Many of these mutilated objects still breathed, and could be seen to heave the agonised bosom; some raised their heads clotted with blood; others their legs and arms; and, in this manner, either made signs to us, or faintly cried for help and pity. It was a sight to turn nature's current, and to melt a heart of stone. Such was its effect upon our lines, that, after a short conflict of the softer feelings, the eye of every man flashed the vivid spark of vengeance against the cruel race who had committed such wanton barbarities; and, if mortal effort could have surmounted the obstacles in our path, those who witnessed the horrid scene I have just described must infallibly have succeeded. But the effort was beyond mortal power. Braver hearts, or more loyal, never left the isle of Albion, than those who fell like withered leaves, and found a soldier's grave at Bhurtpore.

"Our ascent was found for the fourth time to be quite impossible; every man who showed himself was sure of death. The soldiers in the fort were in chain armour. I speak this from positive conviction, for I myself fired at one man three times in the bastion, who was not six yards from me, and he did not even bob his head. We were told afterwards that every man defending the breach was in full armour, which was a coat, breast-plate, shoulder-plates, and armlets, with a helmet and chain face-guard; so that our shots could avail but little. I had not been on the breach more than five minutes when I was struck with a large shot on my back, thrown down from the top of the bastion, which made me lose my footing, and I was rolling down sideways when I was brought up by a bayonet of one of our grenadiers passing through the shoe into the fleshy part of the foot, and under the great toe. My fall carried everything down that was under me. The man who assisted me in getting up was at that moment shot dead: his name was Courtenay, of the 22nd Light Company. I regained my place time enough to see poor Lieutenant Templer, who had planted the colour on the top, cut to pieces, by one of the enemy rushing out and cutting him almost in two, as he lay flat upon his face on the top of the breach. The man was immediately shot dead, and trotted to the bottom of the ditch. I had not been in my new place long, when a stink-pot, or rather earthen pot, containing

combustible matter, fell on my pouch, in which were about fifty rounds of ball cartridges. The whole exploded ; my pouch I never saw more, and I was precipitated from the top to the bottom of the bastion. How I got there in safety I know not ; but, when I came to myself, I found I was lying under the breach, with my legs in the water. I was much hurt from the fall, my face was severely scorched, my clothes much burnt, and all the hair on the back of my head burnt off. I for a time could not tell where I was. I crawled to the opposite side of the bank, and seated myself by a soldier of the same company, who did not know me. I sat here, quite unable to move, for some little time, till a cannon-ball struck in the ditch, which knocked the mud all over me. This added greatly to the elegance of my appearance ; and in this state I contrived, somehow or other, to crawl out of the ditch. At this moment the retreat was sounded, after every mortal effort had been made in vain."

Of the twelve men who composed this third forlorn hope led by our hero, not one came back with him to claim his reward. More than three thousand men having been lost against Bhurtpore, Lord Lake reluctantly had to confess that it was too strong for him. The prime cause of this failure, as Shipp says, had been no doubt the want of adequate means for such a siege. There were not nearly enough breaching-guns, and these had more than once been rendered unserviceable by the constant firing. The art of mining was hardly known in India at that period, yet this was the only way by which Bhurtpore could have fallen, and the way by which it did fall before our troops in another siege twenty years later.

VII.

THOUGH the repeated attacks on Bhurtpore had failed, the courage of our soldiers proved not to have been thrown away. It so much impressed the Rajah, that after tedious negotiations, during which a blockade was kept up round the city, he made peace with the British, and remained in friendship with them for a good many years to come ; so the object of the siege was gained without the crowning horrors that must have attended a successful storm.

This good understanding, however, came near to being destroyed at the outset. On the ratification of the treaty the Rajah's troops were allowed to visit the English camp. Then many of them had the folly and impudence to appear there with the very coats, sashes, and weapons they had taken from the dead bodies of the assailants, flaunting these trophies before the eyes of their indignant comrades. It was more than the English soldier could bear, sore as he was from the sense of recent defeat. At once the whole camp was up in fury; and had it not been for the prompt interference of the officers and Lord Lake in person, these boasting Mussulmen would have paid dear for their ill-timed display.

The disheartened troops were duly soothed and flattered into better spirits by the compliments of the commander-in-chief, who recognised in his orders that they had done all that could be expected of them. Our young hero, as had been promised, received a more tangible reward. Being now just twenty years old, he was gazetted as ensign of his Majesty's 65th regiment.

"On the day of my appointment I was metamorphosed into a gentleman: hair cut and curled, new coat, etc., etc.; had an invitation to dine with the commander-in-chief, but of course kept myself in the background. The gentleman did not seem to sit easy upon me, for you must know I was then a modest, blushing youth." Lord Lake, however, was not slow in giving him a lesson in gentlemanliness; he welcomed the young ensign with friendly courtesy, trying to put him at his ease, and promising to befriend him. John Shipp, bound the day before to do reverence to the rawest subaltern, now found himself seated at dinner next the commander-in-chief, the greatest man of his little world, who, when the cloth was taken away, made him tell the whole story of the forlorn hopes, a subject on which he needed be at no loss for conversation. Nor did his lordship's interest end in mere courtesy. He insisted on advancing the new-made ensign what money he might require for his equipment, and sent him a tent, a horse, and two camels, as presents. His generous captain, Lindsay, did the rest for him.

His brother officers in the new regiment received him no less with open arms. There seems here to have been none of that snobbish spirit sometimes shown to men risen from the ranks.

Shipp speaks of them as having been on excellent terms with him during the short time he remained in this regiment. For the ensigncy proved to be only an instalment of Lord Lake's favour : in three weeks or so he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant in the 76th, and a few days after was appointed extra aide-de-camp to his colonel, who as brigadier-general was proceeding on a strong foraging party in the face of Holkar.

It had been one of the articles of the treaty with the Rajah, that this formidable Mahratta leader should be driven from under the walls of Bhurtpore. This had been done, but he still hovered about the English camp, annoying and threatening their detached parties. So now Shipp was to have another brush with the old enemy.

"We had not proceeded many miles from camp, when we saw Holkar's troops in immense force, posted on an eminence. They showed symptoms of fight. We collected our elephants, camels, and bullocks, and left them in charge of the five hundred irregular horse ; then, placing two of the six-pounders behind the regiment of Native cavalry, we moved slowly on till within two or three hundred yards of the enemy, when we gave them about twenty rounds of grape, killing great numbers. We then charged them, and cut up a great number more. I had a narrow escape ; my horse was killed by a spear-wound in the chest, which entered his heart, and I fell under him. The horseman was about to give me a few inches of the same spear, when the honourable brigadier cut him down, and thus I escaped, taking the liberty of riding my well-meaning adversary's horse to camp. I was a good deal hurt by the fall, but this, with one or two men wounded, and some few horses killed, were the only casualties of the day."

Holkar now retired from the contest, and the English went into quarters. Next year, all looking peaceful, the 76th was sent back to Calcutta. It was indeed time for them to have some rest ; the gallant corps had been literally cut to pieces. Twenty-five years it had served in India, and Shipp believes that only two of the original force now remained, while there was hardly a sound man left in the whole regiment.

Our young lieutenant went on before the main body, in charge of invalids, many of whom died on the way. His own injuries continued to do well, though from time to time he was troubled by excruciating headaches and dizziness, from the wound in his

head, while the terrific spectacle of the last scene at Bhurtpore had been so stamped upon his mind, that scarcely a night passed, he tells us, in which he did not dream of "hairbreadth 'scapes in the imminent deadly breach," and fancy he was fighting his dreadful battles over again. The report of a gun would startle him, and his sight, as well as his appearance, was affected by that hurt in the forehead, which proved long in healing, and might not have healed even so well if he had not taken care of himself, especially by avoiding drink. When he wrote his narrative, twenty-four years later, his wounds were still a sure weather-glass, giving him speedy notice of any change in the atmosphere.

At Calcutta the soldiers were received as they deserved, and Shipp, with his blushing honours thick upon him, had his full share of the famous hospitality of East Indian society. Wherever he went he had to tell his story, and no doubt found some fair Desdemonas who thought none the worse of him for having so well fought his way from the ranks. But his thoughts were now bent on home, though his fortune seemed to lie in India, where he might have remained, making an advantageous exchange, with every prospect of getting on through his own qualities and the patronage of Lord Lake. He had reason to believe that his father, after a long absence on service, had returned to Suffolk; and naturally he was anxious to present himself before the old man, especially now that he could do so in the character of an officer and a gentleman.

He embarked with a detachment of invalids, commanded by his old friend, Captain Lindsay. The voyage was likely to be long, but might not be so monotonous as at the present day, for there was always the chance of meeting French cruisers on the way. Thirteen Indiamen sailed in company, convoyed by two men-of-war. The men were drilled and practised at the guns once a week, and a good look-out was kept for the enemy, who did not fail to put in an appearance.

"Off the coast of Madagascar a ship was discovered, early in the morning, standing right down upon us. Seeing her a single vessel, we conceived her to be one of our cruisers from off the Cape of Good Hope; but when she was within one mile and a half from us, she could not answer our signals, and consequently ran towards the land, which was to windward of us. The *Tremendous*, being a fast sailer, went in chase of her. The

Frenchman soon found that he was mistaken. He, no doubt, at first took us for a French fleet that was then out in these seas, and relied upon his fast and superior sailing to enable him to get away, should he prove mistaken ; but our commodore overhauled him hand over hand. The Frenchman tacked, turned, and twisted, but he found it was of no use. He therefore resorted to his natural cunning, shortened sail, and at last backed maintopsail, and waited till the English vessel came within pistol-shot. The commodore, conceiving that the Frenchman was about to strike, did not wish to injure her, and therefore would not fire. The French captain availed himself of this interval, and gave the *Tremendous* a whole broadside, by which she was so disabled as to become an immovable log on the water. The Frenchman up-helm, and off he started. The commodore at last got his ship's broadside to bear, and nearly tore her out of the water. However, she was a faster sailer than any ship in our fleet, and finally made her escape, to the mortification of the whole fleet, except one Captain Brusée, a French prisoner of war, a passenger on board our ship, who danced with ineffable delight—natural enough ; but not very pleasant to the sight of an Englishman."

Then the fleet had to face the more serious danger of a tropical hurricane, in which one vessel was nearly lost, and three were for a time separated from the rest, so that it began to be feared that they had fallen into the hands of the French. By the way, this French man-of-war which attacked them is stated to have had a narrow escape, putting in to repair her damages at the Cape of Good Hope, not aware that this Colony had once more become an English possession. She found out her mistake just in time to cut and run for it. The three missing Indiamen turned up all right at St. Helena, and the fleet reached England safely in October, 1807.

Lieutenant Shipp's first duty was to take his invalids to Chelsea Hospital. Then he rejoined his regiment at Dartford ; but on its being ordered to Nottingham a few days later, he got leave of absence to visit home. Eager to relate his adventures to his father and to all his old acquaintances, he started for Saxmundham. But at the very outset of his journey something happened which he thinks necessary to assure us is the truth, though it may look like fiction.

"On the coach, next to me, sat a pilot from Aldborough, in

Suffolk, who, suddenly addressing himself to me, said, 'I really cannot help thinking, sir, from your extraordinary resemblance to a person I once knew, that you are his son.' The words, '*once knew*,' turned my blood cold, and it was some minutes before I could muster courage to ask the name of the person to whom he referred. What was my astonishment when he at once replied, 'Shipp!' 'Is he, then, dead, sir?' exclaimed I, convinced now that it was my father of whom he spoke. 'I regret to say he is,' replied the pilot; and he added, while his lip quivered, and the tear of sympathy stood in his eye, 'You are his son John; I feel sure that I cannot be mistaken now.' At this moment the coach stopped to change horses, and I jumped off; and, instead of supping with the rest of the passengers, took a solitary stroll to hide my grief."

In spite of the sore news he had just heard, he proceeded on his journey to Suffolk. But when he reached Colchester, the remembrance of his dear old days in this town, where first he put on the King's uniform, came upon him with such force that, forfeiting his coach-fare for the rest of the way, he could not deny himself the pleasure of spending a night here. Early next morning he was sauntering through the once familiar lanes about the barracks. At one place, where the young fifiers used to go every day to practise, he found his name, cut by him twelve years before—and what stirring, changeful years! Soft-hearted as he was brave, he could hardly keep from tears on seeing this simple monument of his former self. "I sat on the stile for an hour, looking at my own name a hundred times over."

At Saxmundham he found two uncles and an aunt, with whom he spent a pleasant fortnight. If these relations had been able or willing to do nothing for him hitherto, they could not fail now to be proud of their gallant nephew, as he of himself; and we may be sure the villagers made much of the workhouse-boy whom nobody may have ever expected to hear of again, but who came back to them covered with honour and gold lace, having by his own merits won his way to a commission at an age when most lads are hardly engaged in the battle of life. And when he rejoined his regiment, being in the grenadier company, he had some right, as he jocularly says, to think himself no small personage.

Here we will leave him, a boy no longer, though he had

plenty more adventures and strange experiences of life—not all, to tell the truth, so much to his credit. Enough to say that he was obliged to sell his hard-earned commission. Then entering the army again as a private soldier, won a second in India, his old field of glory, and again lost it through something of the same recklessness in money matters which he had so often displayed in the front of battle. In spite of the faults thus confessed by him, there are few readers of his memoirs who can lay them down without a kindly feeling towards the author. He tells his story often with a good-natured swagger, and sometimes one suspects a touch of romantic exaggeration, but the facts of his extraordinary career speak for themselves. He was certainly a born soldier, always hungering after a far more than fair proportion of what hard blows were going about the world in his time, yet getting little good to himself out of the flower of his years spent at the cannon's mouth. Had he been born on the other side of the Channel, who knows but that he might have risen to be a Marshal of France, and helped to change the face of Europe? In our army, though he blames no one for it, he never became more than Lieutenant John Shipp.





A FRENCH SCHOOL-BOY.

I.



JEAN FRANÇOIS MARMONTEL was born in 1723 at a little town of southern France, a picturesquely situated spot, thus described in his memoirs: "Bort, seated on the Dordogne, between Auvergne and Limousin, presents at the first view a fearful picture to the traveller, who, at a distance, from the top of the hill, sees it at the bottom of a precipice, threatened with inundation by the torrents that the storms occasion, or with instant annihilation by a chain of volcanic rocks, some planted like towers on the height that commands the town, and others already hanging and half-torn from their base. But Bort assumes an aspect more gay as these fears are dissipated, and the eye extends itself along the valley. On the verdant island that lies beyond the town, surrounded by the stream, and animated by the noise and motion of a mill, is a grove filled with birds. On each bank of the river, orchards, meadows, and cornfields, cultivated by a laborious people, form the varied landscape. Below the town the valley opens, presenting on one side an extensive meadow watered by continual springs, and on the other fields crowned by a circle of hills, whose gentle slope forms a pleasing contrast with the opposite rocks. Farther on, this circle is broken by a torrent which, descending from the mountains, rolls and bounds through forests, among rocks, and over precipices, till it falls into the Dordogne, by one of the most beautiful cataracts of the Continent, both for the volume

of water and the height of its fall—a phenomenon which only wants more frequent spectators to be renowned and admired. It is near this cataract that the little farm of St. Thomas lies, where I used to read Virgil under the shade of the blossoming trees that surrounded our beehives, and where their honey afforded me many a delicious repast. It is on the other side of the town, beyond the mill, and on the slope of the mountain, that the garden lies, where, on welcome holidays, my father used to lead me to gather grapes from the vines which he himself had planted, or cherries, plums, and apples from the trees he had grafted. But the principal charm that my native village has left on my memory arises from the vivid impression I still retain of the first feelings with which my soul was imbued and penetrated by the inexpressible tenderness that my parents showed me. If I have any kindness in my character, I am persuaded that I owe it to these gentle emotions, to the habitual happiness of loving and being loved."

This boy was the eldest of a large family, whose home, in good old patriarchal fashion, gave shelter to several generations of inmates. His grandmother by the mother's side is mentioned as the real housekeeper and mistress, doing most at least towards spoiling her grandchildren, though the kind mother was indulgent enough for her own part. Under the same roof lived an aunt and three grand-aunts, sisters of the grandmother, along with two great-grandmothers, her own and her husband's mother, whom Jean François remembers at the age of eighty drinking their glass of wine by the fireside, and telling the young ones wonders from the good old times. Our rude English notions might augur an unquiet house from a pair of mothers-in-law to the second power, so to speak, but such family arrangements appear to work better in France. His father, the only man in this hive of women and children, is remembered as kind in intention, yet a little rough and severe of manner, as well he might seem compared with all the fond aunts and grannies.

The Marmontels were not rich. The produce of a small-farm, eked out by frugality, had to support the numerous inmates of their home. We are apt to think of the France of that period as corrupt to the core, one troubled mass of oppressors and oppressed; yet here we have an idyllic picture of beautiful rustic simplicity and pure content which reads

like a prose version of Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," a real model for the Happy Valley of "Rasselas." If our author has painted the scenes of his youth in too bright colours, it is not the first time that distance has lent enchantment to such a view. There was no envy, and no pride, we are to understand, in this quiet nook. That liberty, fraternity, and equality, the dream of which was soon so terribly to agitate France, appears in the Limousin village to have been practically realized, as far as met the eye of a child. The inhabitants were all industrious, comfortably off without being rich, friendly to one another, and gentle in their manners to boot, while clinging to their native soil with the warm affection of highlanders. Their own fields supplied them with enough of the necessities of life; nor were there wanting the Sabine luxuries dear to childhood.

"My aunts spun the wool and the hemp of the field that furnished us with linen; and on the evenings when by the light of the lamp, supplied with oil from our nut-trees, the young people of the neighbourhood came to help us to dress our flax, the picture was exquisite. The harvest of the little farm secured us subsistence; the wax and honey of the bees, to which one of my aunts carefully attended, formed a revenue that cost but little; the oil pressed from our green walnuts had a taste and smell that we preferred to the flavour and perfume of that of the olive. Our buckwheat cakes, moistened, smoking hot, with the good butter of Mont d'Or, were a delicious treat to us. I know not what dish would have appeared to us better than our turnips and our chestnuts; and on a winter evening, while these fine turnips were roasting round the fire, and we heard the water boiling in the vessel where our chestnuts were cooking, so relishing and so sweet, how did our hearts palpitate with joy!"

Among the other superiorities of the good folks at Bort, they are stated to have had a great respect for education; therefore our hero was sent betimes to school. His first seminary was a little convent of nuns, where he learnt to read among girls, a favoured exception made in his case by the good sisters, who loved him as their own child. From this he passed to the school kept by a priest, who had gratuitously devoted himself to the instruction of the young, an example more common in Catholic than in Protestant countries. He has nothing but kindly and reverential memories of this worthy man, and he

remembers with equal affection a friend and rival among the boys, a perfect paragon of virtue, diligence, propriety, and neatness—a model youth, in fact, who excited in the highest degree his schoolfellow's esteem and emulation. This French Harry Sandford was the son of a labourer in another village. Marmontel used to go home with him; then, oh! the delicious cream, the sweet milk, the excellent brown bread, that he had at the house of that good old grey-headed man. Nor did the well-behaved boy go wrong in after-life. Twenty years afterwards Marmontel met him in Paris, and found him still a pattern of steadiness and right feeling. There is a tendency nowadays to sneer at pattern boys, who do not always, indeed, turn out all that might be expected of them. On the other hand, bad boys are still more apt to prove objectionable characters in after-life. Good boys, as well as good men, are to be met with everywhere; and if the former are rather discredited by critical persons, it is because what is called goodness in boys often, not always, means merely a want of spirit that is afraid to break the bounds of correct behaviour.

All these early recollections are evidently tinged in *couleur de rose*. Marmontel, unlike some boys we know, loved his lessons, Latin and all, and this in spite of a sad lack of memory, which made trying to learn by heart with him like "writing on a quicksand." To supply this defect he had to work so hard that he made himself quite ill; he could not rest at night, but would start up gabbling over his lessons in his sleep. His father declared that Latin would drive him mad, and he had to leave it off for several months. Yet notwithstanding such hindrance, at the age of twelve he had got all that was to be learned at the little village school, and his master advised his being sent to a college, or what we should call a grammar school. The only difficulty was expense, which the father grudged, always grumbling, too, against that useless Latin. It only made people lazy, was his experience—practical country people are commonly apt to think of an ounce of mother-wit as equal to a pound of learning; and truly a little knowledge might prove a dangerous thing for a farmer's son if he had to get his living by hard work. On the other hand, the mother's pride was set upon having her eldest son a scholar. So it was finally agreed that the boy should be taken to the nearest school of any pretensions, that of Mauriac in Auvergne.

Amid a shower of kisses and tears he left home, riding behind his father, his little heart beating with joy when once the April cloud of parting was past. The only fear of this singular schoolboy was that he should have to come straight home again, for such was the father's intention if he proved unfit for the fourth class. How he trembled on appearing before the judge who was to decide his fate—a good priest whose looks, whose very voice gave a welcome to the timid tyro! Alas! the examination showed him far below the required standard; he was pronounced hardly fit for even the fifth class. Standing thus like a despairing Peri on the threshold of this scholastic paradise, he began to cry and implored the examiner for pity's sake to let him pass, pleading his mother's grief and his own if he should be rejected, promising to study so hard as to make up for all deficiencies. What dominie could resist such earnest entreaties? The benevolent priest gave way; the boy was admitted with kindly words of encouragement, and made as happy in having the desire of his heart as many another new boy would have felt at being turned away.

Lodgings had now to be found for him, as was the custom, in some household of the place, an arrangement once common enough at English schools, and still lingering in certain out-of-the-way districts: such a humble boarding-house it was of which Wordsworth speaks so warmly in his youthful recollections, no other than such indeed were formerly the "Dame's Houses" of proud Eton. If any boarders were taken at the college itself, which does not appear, they would probably be youths destined for the priesthood; for in Jesuit establishments, as this was, these children of grace are kept distinct from the little laity permitted to share their studies. Marmontel's father, then, settled the boy at the house of an honest mechanic, where there were five other scholars, and sorrowfully left him with his bundle of clothes and supply of provisions for the week, consisting of a large loaf of rye-bread, a small cheese, a piece of bacon, two or three pounds of beef and a dozen apples. Boys were thought not ill fed who fared so well. Their friends had to find them in food; a weekly parcel containing also the scholar's washing, would go to and fro, his home not being too far distant for such communication. On her part, the good woman of the house provided lodging, light, fire and cooking, and vegetables for the "soup," that great

dish of French family life, all at the small charge of twenty-five sous a month ! So, reckoning teaching, books, and everything except clothes, our boy's education cost his father some four pounds a year—the only drawback to his satisfaction.

It was not a luxurious life that could be led on these terms. The worst of it was the cold ; the boys slept in a chamber too well ventilated through cracks in the rickety window ; then, in winter, they picked their way home through the snow to find no fire but a few "half-burnt billets hissing at each other under the kettle," and even this would be monopolised by the people of the house, hardly permitting the poor boarders, as a favour, to thaw their hands in turn. And in the evening they had to learn their lessons by only the dull flame of a lamp, when often their fingers were too much benumbed to hold the pen. Some of them, hardy lads from the mountains of Auvergne, were well seasoned to such trials, and of course did not fail to mock at the shivering of a more delicate lowlander. Marmontel used to reproach himself for being more chilly and tender than the rest ; he went out in ice and snow, manfully trying to harden his body to the severe weather, but, though thus he learned to endure, it was a victory only of the mind, and he did not cease to suffer. For him the greatest treat of the short Christmas holidays was lying in a snug bed, or sitting by a cosy hearth well piled with glowing embers. One needs to have suffered from cold to know the luxury of warmth. Too many schoolboys of the good old times look back on their schooldays mainly as a time of chapped hands and chilblains, small but most real miseries of life.

Another pleasure of Christmas, after these lean months at school, used to be the plentiful provision which the good grandmother took such pride in making for the winter. The hungry schoolboy's mouth must have watered when she showed him her treasures of bacon, of ham, of sausages, of honey, of oil, of fruits, nuts, and vegetables ! "See, my dear," she would say, "these are the gifts Providence has sent ; how many honest families have not received as much as we !" So far as her own tastes went, nobody could be more moderate than this careful housewife, but her happiness consisted in presiding over abundance. Once a year, at least, "it snowéd in that house of meat and drink."

"The treat she used to give us with the most lively joy, was

that on Christmas night. As it was every year the same, all expected it, but care was taken not to appear to do so ; for she flattered herself every year that the surprise would be new, and this was a pleasure we were careful not to deprive her of. While all were at midnight mass, the green cabbage soup, the pudding, the sausage, the piece of salt pork of the brightest red, the cakes, the apple-fritters fried in lard, all were mysteriously prepared by her and one of her sisters ; and I, the sole confidant of all these preparations, said not a syllable to anyone. After mass, the family all returned ; and finding this excellent collation on the table, they exclaimed at the magnificence of the good grandmother. This exclamation of surprise and joy was to her a complete triumph."

Practical experience in domestic economy must have formed part of the educational course at Mauriac. It was often, no doubt, a sore trial for hungry youngsters to eke out their scanty store so as not to go dinnerless by the end of the week. Need, however, is a hard and thorough teacher. The new-comers, we are told, soon learned from the seniors to be careful, not only of their provisions, but of their clothes and books—a lesson much wanted by some of our schoolboys. Each lad's morsel of bacon, beef, or mutton, went into the pot together, all strung like beads upon a chaplet ; and if any disputes arose as to ownership, the mistress of the house stood umpire. When anyone got a "hamper" from home, the dainties were shared among all ; even those whose parents never showed themselves thus liberal, had their part as well as the rest. So great was the delicacy of feeling on this point, we are told, that when one of these presents came to hand, it was the goodwife's duty to announce a treat, without disclosing the name of the fortunate furnisher !

Less acute were the feelings of the Mauriac scholars upon a more important point of morality. They would not dream of stealing a pin, but, by a perversion common to the schoolboy mind in that age, they had laid it down that eatable property was to be held outside of the ordinary rules regulating the relation of *meum* and *tuum* ; so they thought no shame to pocket any green peas that seemed made to go with their bacon, always supposing the owner to be out of the way. Apples, pears, grapes, and so forth, do not happen to be mentioned in this connection ; but it is well not to ask too many

questions. Marmontel, while admitting some such blemish in the character of these best of all possible schoolboys, takes credit to himself for abstaining "as much as possible" from their sly depredations. Yet he admits that, even when he did not steal himself, he could not but help to eat what had been stolen. It appeared to him, then, in the light of a duty not to be better than his companions. And if his conscience still pricked him, he managed to make things all right with his confessor, for confession was a regular, and, as he thinks, a most salutary part of the discipline of the college.

We need not question that these schoolfellows of his had many merits fostered by the peculiar features of their education, and were more free from certain faults too rife in certain other youthful communities; but when we read his extravagant account of their Arcadian virtue, we are tempted to desire a description of the same boys from the neighbouring farmers' point of view. It might prove then that these urchins were creatures "not *too* bright and good" after all. They did well if they were half so admirable as they are painted. Out of school hours, for all that appears, they were allowed to go about pretty much as they pleased. Racing, boxing, wrestling, quoits, slinging and swimming were their amusements, imitated, we are given to understand, "from the ancient games," a statement reminding us of that scholar to whose profound erudition we owe the knowledge that Athenian children cried when they were whipped. In winter, like the ancient Greeks and Romans and a good many other people, they had plenty of ice and snow to amuse themselves with. In summer they took long country rambles; they bathed, they fished for eels and trout; little boys were content to hunt crayfish in the rivulets; others caught quails with nets after harvest time; then there was pilfering peas and the like, and if they got into any further mischief we hear nothing about it.

Certainly a very different school-life from that of modern French Lycées, which are a mixture of barrack and prison with a dash of monastery. But though these boys may seem to have been little enough looked after, we may be sure their Jesuit instructors did not neglect to keep an eye upon them. Their boarding-houses would probably be visited by the authorities from time to time. In hours of study or preparation, the scholars themselves are stated to have formed a police,

keeping one another to silence and attention. The trifler would be rebuked, the dull boy encouraged and aided if he showed a mind to work. Those who did not work or behaved badly might be turned away from their boarding-house, for a house contaminated by such characters became despised by the whole school, and avoided by prudent parents, so that it was the interest of the inhabitants to take in none but steady lads. Towards the end of the session, when boys were to rise from one class to another by examination, a fury of industry raged throughout the school. One of the chief tasks then would be learning long passages from the classics by heart, which was done chiefly in the early morning. The more studious pulled the others out of bed, willy nilly, then forth they sallied into the fields, where, each his book in hand, they "went humming along like swarms of bees." In scarcely one of the houses was idleness tolerated; never would play be allowed to come in the way of work. No Rugby præpostor in Arnold's time could have been more conscientious or zealous for the welfare of his "house" and school than were the seniors at Mauriac, according to Marmontel's account of them, from which one turns a little dubiously to such schoolboys as he knows in the flesh.

But before dismissing the voluntary diligence of these young Auvergnats as too good to be true, let us remember the extraordinary influence which the Jesuit teachers succeeded in bringing to bear upon the minds of their pupils. That order supplied the best teachers of the age; they were, indeed, almost the only teachers who had studied the art of teaching. "Teaching!" an English head-master is said to have exclaimed when complimented on his work—"I know nothing about teaching boys. I flog and they learn." While most schoolmasters of the old school had no more advanced views of education, the Jesuits carefully practised the secret of sugaring that bitter pill of knowledge which has to be swallowed with wry faces or otherwise, and of making their schools answer as far as possible to the old classical name *ludus*, which must have seemed such a bitter mockery to so many smarting tyros. They studied the character not only of boyhood, but of individual scholars; they sought to go with the grain of human nature rather than against it; they put love, duty, and ambition as much as might be in the place of fear, devising, as one of their historians says,

"hundreds of expedients, tending to sharpen boys' wits, to lighten the labour of the master, and to free him from the invidious and troublesome necessity of punishing." When it did come to that *ultima ratio* of dominies, the rod would be wielded by a "corrector" who was not himself a member of the Order; it seemed no learned divine's work to whip a naughty child. The aim was to make lessons short and spirited, giving no excuse for inattention. Discipline was to a great extent maintained by a magistracy of the boys themselves—the monitorial system, in fact. Distinctions, marks of disgrace, badges of honour, promotions and the like, played a great part in the machinery of management, all kept well greased by constant and careful superintendence. We know how easily even boys will enter into a lesson when it is contrived to appear a game or a fight, as in the case of "spelling-bees;" the Jesuits knew this well. Mr. Quick, in his valuable "Essays on Educational Reformers," gives an account of the way in which their scholars were set to whet one another's dulness.

"All the boys in the lower part of the school were arranged in pairs, each pair being rivals (*æmuli*) to one another. Every boy was to be constantly on the watch to catch his rival tripping, and was immediately to correct him. Besides this individual rivalry, every class was divided into two hostile camps, called Rome and Carthage, which had frequent pitched battles of questions on set subjects. These were the 'Concertations' in which the boys sometimes had to put questions to the opposite camp, sometimes to expose erroneous answers when the questions were asked by the master. Emulation, indeed, was encouraged to a point where, as it seems to me, it must have endangered the good feeling of the boys among themselves. Jouvençy mentions a practice of appointing mock defenders of any particularly bad exercise, who should make the author of it ridiculous by their excuses: and anybody whose work was very discreditable was placed on a form by himself, with a daily punishment, until he could show that some one deserved to change places with him."

The Jesuits, then, might well succeed in winning the eagerness and goodwill of pupils, who under the time-honoured flogging and "gerund-grinding" system would have hated their lessons as heartily as some of us. Their system was by no means perfect; it fostered memory and taste at the expense of

reflection and judgment; of set purpose it starved the reason which in a healthy state is so apt to ask awkward questions; it did not a little to distort morality in the interests of priesthood; but, so far as mere scholarship went, it was excellent. Thus, therefore, as in other ways, has this vigorous Order exercised a powerful influence, traces of which indeed are still visible in the public-school system of France, though Jesuits be no longer allowed to teach there. "For more than one hundred years," says Mr. Quick, "nearly all the foremost men throughout Christendom, both among the clergy and the laity, had received the Jesuit training, and for life regarded their old masters with reverence and affection."

II.

MARMONTEL had reason to look back with warm affection on his schooldays at Mauriac. He was one of those fortunate schoolboys to whom their work is a pleasure, having such a mind as readily took on the polish of a classical education—all the more credit to sturdy fellows who like Latin and Greek as little as oil likes vinegar, and yet stick to their task and master nature manfully! Even in the holidays, he says, his happiest hours were spent reading the Georgics, among his father's beehives, though he found that his aunt knew practically more about bees than Virgil did. When once he had got used to the ways of this school, and a little "clear of the thorns of syntax," leaving less of his fleece behind in that rough thicket than some poor lambs, he felt himself to be the right boy in the right place. At first, indeed, he found that he had a good deal of leeway to make up after his imperfect grounding at a village school; but he seems to have been treated with great consideration. On the day after his arrival, as he was going to school, he saw the master of his class at a window, who beckoned him to come in.

"My son," said he, "you have need of private instruction and much study to overtake your fellow-students. Let us begin with the rudiments: come here half-an-hour before lectures, every morning, to repeat the rules you have learned, and I will explain them to you."

It was kind of the dominie, and Marmontel, in thanking him, took courage to ask a further favour, that he might not be put to

the blush by having his blundering exercises read aloud in class for a time. This also was granted, the boy weeping tears of gratitude. The master wept, too, he says, when he showed him his mother's letters gushing with the sense of such favours shown to her darling. Tears and other tokens of emotion, it will be seen, lie somewhat near the surface in these warm-blooded sons of the south.

Other help, too, he had, such as few schoolboys get the chance of. Father Bourges, the teacher of the lowest class, is mentioned as one of the best Latin scholars of his time, who yet, as a voluntary act of devotion, had humbly sought from his superiors the privilege of teaching small urchins their grammar.

"He took an interest in my improvement, and invited me to come to him on holidays. You will easily believe I did not fail, and he had the kindness to dedicate occasionally whole hours to my instruction. Alas! the only service I could render him was to wait on him at mass; but that was a merit in his eyes, and for the following reason. When this good old man was praying, he was perpetually anxious lest his attention should be diverted from his prayers—which he could only prevent by a most painful attention of mind. While saying mass, he exerted every effort to fix his thought on each sentence he pronounced; and when he came to the words of the sacrifice, drops of sweat fell from his bald forehead as he bowed. I have seen his whole body tremble with respect and terror, as if he had beheld the roof of heaven open and the living God descend. Never was there an example of a more lively and profound faith; so that by the performance of this sacred duty, he was almost exhausted. He used to revive himself with the pleasure he had in teaching me, and with that which I felt in receiving his instructions. He it was who instructed me in ancient literature, that inexhaustible source of riches and beauty, and who inspired me with a thirst for it, which sixty years of study have not yet extinguished. Thus, in an obscure school, had I the good fortune to be guided in my pursuits by one of the most learned men that perhaps the world knew."

Besides such a patron, our hero had again a pattern in one of the senior boys, to whom at a distance he looked up with the utmost admiration, not untinctured with envy. This youth, Amalvy by name, is described as being absolutely perfection.

All the excellences of mind and heart were united in him, set off by an exterior to match, his countenance mild yet noble, his figure tall, his deportment grave, his air serious but serene. He had no rivals ; the cross, which the *dux* of each class wore as a medal, never left his button-hole. His class-fellows attended him like courtiers, proud to be in his company. Yet we must not suppose him to have been unduly proud. "Sociable, yet not too familiar, he never divested himself of that dignity which arose from the long habit of surpassing his fellows."

A painful suspicion occurs to us with regard to this all admirable Amalvy, that his must have been a character of a certain kind dear neither to boys, masters, nor moralists of the present day—"letters four do form his name." Out on this nineteenth century cynicism that scans so critically the hero of a schoolboy's enthusiasm ! Marmontel had no suspicions of precocious priggism ; it was a pleasure to him merely to see his paragon, and from every sight of him he returned dissatisfied with himself. All his hope and ambition was to become a second Amalvy.

So far did he succeed as to become oftener and oftener top of his own class, with the coveted cross to mark his rank for the time. The loving mother at home, when his dimity waistcoats came back to be washed, looked eagerly to see if this badge of honour, with its silver chain, had blackened his button-hole. If so, all the mothers in the neighbourhood were sure to hear of her boy's triumph—the good nuns, his first teachers, gave thanks to heaven ; and his old schoolmaster appeared radiant with reflected glory, little credit as seems to have been owing to him. A most tender spot in a Frenchman's heart is the love between mother and son. We can believe Marmontel, then, when he tells us how the dearest of recollections for him is that of the happiness he gave his mother through these school distinctions.

Crosses, too, of another sort, there were to have afflicted her, if he had allowed himself, as he did not, to tell this kind of tale out of school. Rank, we learn, has its burdens as well as its baubles. The head of the class was expected to perform the unwelcome duties of censor in the absence of the master ; and it was while he ought to have been thus keeping his companions out of mischief that our hero got into his first scrape, for scrapes

he got into after all at this school, and we are now about to recognise some of the familiar features of erring juvenile human nature.

It appears that these boys were not such good boys but that they resented Master Marmontel's being more docile and diligent than themselves. The private lessons he had from the masters, along, perhaps, with his grateful anxiety to please, had earned him the bad name of a *favourite*. We know what that means among boys—nasty things had been said, suspicions shown, and so forth. Conscious of labouring under this imputation, he was naturally all the more anxious to clear his character by proving himself faithful to the code of schoolboy morality. So when, as censor, he presided over the class for half an hour or so, he would not be too strict, but let the boys talk, laugh, and amuse themselves within reason, saying nothing of these infractions of rule in the official notes he had to keep. The boys, of course, voted him a good fellow; but where he gave them an inch they would be sure to take an ell, so that the class, under his charge, became more and more noisy, as his appetite for their approval grew by what it fed on.

One day, when he was acting as censor of the third class, his classical reading put into his head a most unfortunate precedent. He remembered that the rich ediles at Rome used to court popular favour by giving shows to the multitude—*panem et circenses*! He would do the like, as far as the entertainment went, other forms of bribery being out of the question. There was a boy in the class named Toury, who had the reputation of a first-class performer of the national dance of Auvergne, what in that part of the world is equal to our "Highland fling" or "Irish jig." So what must this pretty censor do but call upon Master Toury for an exhibition of his skill, who was found nothing loath, nor were the others to look on. He danced so well that the performance was encored again and again. As in his wooden shoes capped with iron the dancer capered about on the resounding stone slabs which formed the floor of the class-room, he of course made a great noise, and this attracted a spectator whom they had not bargained for.

Father Bis, the prefect, or chief executive officer of the school, happened to be going his rounds. He hastened to the room to see what might be this disturbance. Like mice on the appearance of the cat, off went all these idlers to their

places ; Toury himself was instantly seated in a corner with eyes bent on his book, the very image of industrious propriety. The prefect, in a rage, applied himself to the censor for his "note" or report on the delinquents ; but not a line of report was forthcoming. Then, naturally, there was a "row." The outraged master, unable to find anyone else to punish, turned his indignation upon the faithless censor, and sentenced him to the impositions which he should have helped to lay upon the others.

Our young friend takes some credit to himself for the manner in which he submitted to this punishment, borne as patiently as he had been resolute and obstinate in not giving pain to his companions. "My courage was sustained by the honour of hearing myself called the martyr, and even sometimes the hero of my class." This is the kind of sentiment which goes some way towards bearing out Bismarck's bitter saying, that you may give a Frenchman five-and-twenty lashes, and if you only talk to him all the while about honour and glory and the rest of it, he will not know that he is being flogged.

But young Marmontel had very decided notions about being flogged. His second scrape brought him within perilous distance of that experience. He had risen into the next class, the teacher of which was not all that he might have been. Among other crusty tricks, he had a way of appealing to the boys through jealousy. If one of the dunces did at all better than usual, he would praise him in such a fashion as to provoke the rest. Thus, once he began to extol a certain exercise that had been given in by one Durif, who passed for an indifferent scholar enough, defying all the rest to equal it. The boys chafed under this reproach, the more so as Durif was known to have had the exercise written for him—a high misdemeanour by the laws of the school. Nettled by having borrowed merit thus flung in their faces, they called out that the exercise was not Durif's own. "And whose is it, then?" came next. All were silent. The master got angry ; he addressed himself to the boy who happened to be "up" at the moment, insisting on an answer. Instead of sturdily protesting that "he would rather not say," as would be considered to become a British schoolboy under the circumstances, this boy began to cry and *told*. Marmontel was the culprit. He had to confess his guilt, but begged

the master to listen to a plea of extenuating circumstances, such as go a long way in French courts. It had been Durif's birthday ; he had treated the other boys to a feast, and, entirely occupied by the duties of hospitality, had not left himself time to do his school work. "Seeing him most truly anxious about his exercise, I thought it allowable and just to spare him the pains, and I offered to employ myself for him while he employed himself for us !"

Even this fine turn given to the story did not conciliate the unreasonable master, angry with the boys because his caustic remarks proved to have gone rather wide of their aim. There were two in the fault, but he turned all his anger upon one, ordering the corrector to be called to flog Marmontel. At the mention of the corrector, Marmontel put his books together, declaring that he would leave the school rather than submit. But now the other boys' natural sense of justice was stirred to aid him. The whole class exclaimed that the punishment would be unjust, and if he went away they would all go with him. At this the master allowed himself to be appeased. He pardoned our hero in the name of the class, quoting, to justify himself, a classical precedent in point, that of the Dictator Papirius when he granted the life of his disobedient but victorious lieutenant, Fabius, to the prayers of the senate and the people. The whole school approved this act of clemency or policy, except Father Bis, who maintained it to be a weak yielding, hurtful to discipline. The prefect prided himself on being made of sterner stuff, as Marmontel found, to his cost, on having to deal with this strict disciplinarian.

His third and last collision with the authorities was the most serious one. By this time he was in the highest division of the school, the rhetoric class, as it was called, and at the top of it ; he would be about fifteen, and had only one more month to be done with Mauriac. These things being so, he got into trouble in a way recalling one of the incidents in the history of Tom Brown, though more innocently than that Rugby hero. With some other boys, he had gone up a church tower near the school, to see the works of the clock, which were under repair. He little thought what was to come of this curiosity.

"Owing to the unskilfulness of the workmen or to some accident, of which I am ignorant, the clock did not go. It would have been as difficult for children to have deranged these

massive wheels of iron as for mice to have eaten them away ; but the clockmaker accused them of it, and the prefect received his complaint. Next day, at the hour of evening school, he sent for me ; I went to his room. I found there ten or twelve of the boys ranged round the wall, and in the middle the corrector and this terrible master, who had them flogged one by one. On seeing me, he asked if I were one of those who had gone up to the clock. I having answered that I was, he pointed out my place in the circle of my accomplices, and turned to continue his cruelty. You will easily believe that my resolution to escape was soon formed. While he was holding one of his victims, who struggled with him, I took the opportunity suddenly to open the door and run. He rushed forward to catch me, but missed his prey, and I escaped with a tear in my coat." Flying thus from injustice, our hero sought sanctuary in the rhetoric class-room, where the master had not yet arrived. The other boys of the class flocked round him to know the meaning of his torn clothes, his confusion, his indignation. Having thus at the outset gained their eyes and ears, he forthwith proceeded to address them in a long and eloquent oration, which must be taken as reported in the free fashion of Livy or Thucydides.

" ' My friends,' cried I, ' save me, save yourselves—from the hands of a madman that pursues us ! It is my honour—it is your own honour—that I recommend and put under your protection. That violent and unjust man—that Father Bis—had nearly done you the basest outrage in my person, by dishonouring the class of rhetoric with the rod. He has not even deigned to tell me why he wanted to punish me ; but, amid the cries of the children he was flaying, I understood we were accused of having deranged a clock—an absurd accusation of which he felt the falsehood ; but he delights to punish, he loves to drink plentifully of tears, and the guilty and the innocent are alike to him, provided he exercises his tyranny. My particular crime—a crime indelible, and which he can never pardon me—is that of having uniformly refused to betray you, in order to please him, and of preferring to endure his severity rather than to expose my friends. You have seen with what obstinacy he has laboured for three years to make me the spy and accuser of my class. You would be frightened at the mass of study he has loaded me with, in order to wrest from me a

few notes that might give him every day the pleasure of molesting you. My constancy has conquered his ; his hatred has appeared to subside ; but he was watching the moment to revenge himself on me, and on you, for the fidelity I have observed. Yes, my friends ! had I been fearful or feeble enough to have suffered him to lay hands on me, we should have been lost, the class of rhetoric would have been for ever dishonoured. It was at this he aimed ; he desired to have it said that rhetoric had bent under his mastership, and under his humiliating rod. Thank heaven we are saved ! No doubt he is coming to require you to give me up, and I am well assured beforehand of the tone in which you will answer him ; but, had I companions base enough not to defend me, I would singly sell my honour and my life most dearly to him, and would die free rather than live disgraced. No ! far from me be this idea ; I see you all determine, like myself, not to rest under such a yoke. In a month from this time our course of rhetoric is to finish, and our vacation commence ; a month retrenched from the course of our studies does not merit our regret ; let to-day then be the end and close of the labours of our class. From this moment we are free, and that proud, that cruel, that ferocious man is baffled and confounded.*

"My address had excited great indignation, but the conclusion had more effect than all the rest. No peroration ever led captive the minds of its hearers with so much rapidity. The great majority answered me with acclamation : 'Yes, no more rhetoric ! Vacation ! and let us swear before we leave the room, let us swear on this altar' (for there was one there) 'never to set foot in it again.'

"After the oath had been pronounced, I resumed. 'My friends !' said I to them, 'it would not become us to quit this room either as libertines or as fugitive slaves ; let the headmaster never say that we fled ; our retreat should be peaceful and decent ; and, to render it more honourable, I would propose to signalise it by an act of religion. This room is a chapel ; let us return thanks to God in a solemn *Te Deum*, for having acquired and preserved, during the course of our studies, the good-will of the school and the esteem of our masters.'*

"In an instant I beheld them all ranged round the altar, and

* The boy is truly father to the man. How all this prefigures in little the theatrical scenes of the French Revolution, half a century later !

amidst a profound silence one of our companions, Varlarché, whose voice vied with that of the bulls of Cantal, where he was born, chanted the hymn of praise : fifty voices answered his, and the astonishment of the whole school at the extraordinary and sudden noise of this concert of voices may easily be imagined. Our regent was the first who arrived ; the prefect came down, and the principal himself advanced gravely to the door of our schoolroom. The door was kept shut till the *Te Deum* ended ; then, ranged in a semi-circle, the little boys by the side of the big ones, we suffered them to enter. ‘What is this disturbance?’ demanded the furious prefect, as he advanced among us. ‘What you call a disturbance,’ said I, ‘is but a thanksgiving, father, that we render to heaven for having permitted us to complete our first studies without falling into your hands.’ ”

The prefect stormed in vain ; he threatened to inform the boys’ parents of this “criminal revolt ;” he prophesied that Marmontel would turn out chief of some faction—a severe reproach in those days, which was to lose a good deal of its opprobriousness before France came to the end of that century. The principal, with more gentleness, tried to reclaim the mutineers ; but they begged him not to persist in persuading them to break the oath they had sworn !

At last they were left alone with their own regent, Father Balme, who hardly knew what to say to them. Just and gentle as was this popular master, he had sometimes shown a spirit more like a soldier than a monk. One day, a boy having answered him rudely, this son of the church militant rushed from his desk, tore up a board from the oak floor of the room, and brandished it with the exclamation : “Wretch ! I will not flog a boy in the rhetoric class, but I will knock down an insolent fellow who dares to treat me with disrespect !” This kind of irregular and extemporaneous correction quite fell in with the boys’ notions ; they were obliged to him, we are told, for the sensation caused by his vehement outburst, and beheld with pleasure the offender on his knees, humbly asking pardon under the good father’s unwieldy club.

Such a man was clearly not one to stand any nonsense, as the phrase is. On the other hand, Marmontel declares that he was evidently indignant at this attempt to flog one of his class, which seems to have been against rule, or at least unusual. It would not become him, however, to denounce his colleague

before the boys ; so, trying to pass the matter off, he asked : "Why did you not cry out, *Sum civis Romanus* ! 'I am a Roman citizen !' " The hero of the hour did not fail to throw back the ball of neat and prompt classical allusion. "I took good care not to say that," he answered : "I had to do with a Verres."

It was a pity, indeed, to see such a promising pupil going off in the huff, and taking all his class with him. Father Balme did everything he could to keep them, appealing both to common sense and to sentiment, but they held to their oath, firm as Shylock. One knows a good many youngsters likely to keep any oath which they might have made to advance the holidays by a month or so ; but these boys certainly showed some courage in facing their parents with such a decision. Actually they all expelled themselves, it would appear. Their own master, it is asserted, thought none the worse of them for their constancy, and only loved the ringleader all the more. "My son," he whispered to Marmontel, "to whatever school you go my attestation may be of some service to you. This is not the moment to offer it, but come in a month and I will give it you with a sincere and willing heart."

During the vacation, in fact, his rebellious pupil did come back to Mauriac, and ventured into the college for the purpose of receiving this useful "attestation" or character from Father Balme. Having got it, written in the most satisfactory terms, and having embraced the good father with tears in his eyes, he was going away, when, in the well-known corridor, whom should he meet but that severe prefect. "Ah ! is that you, sir ?" said Father Bis, and readily guessed the boy's business. On hearing that Father Balme had given him a good attestation the prefect remarked : "You don't ask for mine." "Alas ! father, I should be very happy to get it, but for that I dare not hope," said Marmontel. "Come into my chamber," said the priest ; "I will show you that you have mistaken me." And thereupon he wrote out for the rebel a character more extravagant in praises than that of his own master, adding, before he sealed it, that if Marmontel was not satisfied, he would say even more for him. The boy stood filled with confusion before this magnanimous mood of his old tyrant ; his eyes again became tearful ; he repented on the spot of all he had said against the prefect. "Do you then pardon me ?" he cried with transport ; and there was another affectionate

embrace. Kissing and crying, forgiving and forgetting, it all turned out like a lovers' quarrel. What a pity they could not have settled the matter sooner, without breaking up the top class of the school a month before the holidays !

So ended this momentous conflict. Some of us may think that Marmontel would have done better to submit, even though the prefect was clearly in the wrong, or at least to have taken some other way of vindicating his innocence and honour, rather than involve himself and all his class in such serious consequences, which might have injured their whole prospects in life. But the story displays a difference of sentiment between French and English schoolboys—a difference which reaches further than boyhood. The oath—the improvised rebellion—the theatrical oration, are all very French, so is the hero's objection to be flogged. Not that English boys at any time were particularly fond of being flogged, but the point of honour with them would rather have been to suffer stoutly and in silence, since so things had fallen out. To most English schoolboys of fifteen in these days, floggings, just or unjust, came so much a matter of course that one more or less would not count as any very terrible misfortune, which the victim could not take out in an exhibition of due fortitude and some hot abuse of the unfair master. The birch was a standing joke with the rising generation then, a grim pleasantry as well as a terror, like the gallows among older offenders. The smart was soon over, and the spite did not remain much longer in the average well-conditioned youngster ; he accepted it all as part of the mysterious dispensations of fate, to be endured if not to be cured. When he grew up he came as often as not to look back on his early castigations with even a certain kindly affection : these bitter moments were blended and lost in the rainbow of boyish happiness, which indeed shines not but through some tears.

This view is well marked in our literature for a century or so back, before which it seemed hardly worth while to take the joys and sufferings of childhood into consideration. Novelists, indeed, who are likely to have been idle and troublesome fellows at school, are found sometimes resentful enough in their pictures of school life, but it is not so with poets and moralists as a rule, nor with our most genial humourists. Dr. Johnson, of course, glories in the rod with brutal frankness ;

Gray disdains to mention it unless through some hint of "the tear forgot as soon as shed;" Coleridge tells with satisfaction how his master flogged him: "wisely as I think, soundly as I know;" Charles Lamb rather chuckles over the ludicrous view of Solomon's precepts put into practice; Hood looks back half-regretfully on the "wholesome anguish" which once did the work of shame and self-reproach. The same feeling still survives in a modified degree, lingering most obstinately in our highest schools, while in France "corporal punishment," that *bête noire* of certain educational reformers among us, has long been forbidden by law, and rods and canes are fossil implements finding their place only in museums. The French schoolboy has a harder time of it now than his English brother in misfortune; but the skin of the former at least is sacred, that old orthodox doctrine being wholly discredited:

"Should Genius a captive in Sloth be confined,
Or the Witchcraft of Pleasure prevail o'er the mind;
This magical rod but apply—with a stroke
The spell is dissolved, the enchantment is broke!"

This is a matter of great controversy nowadays, on which much may be said on both sides. Our somewhat coarse, but natural and practical, way of handling the question seems on the whole preferable to the refined sentimentalities of our neighbours. Surely boys should not be so ready to believe that true honour can be hurt by anything done to it from without. If these restless and thoughtless members of the community must be punished, is not a short and sharp infliction better for them in all ways, and more to the taste of most boys, if that were the thing to be consulted, than solitary confinement, long impositions, keeping in from play, and the like devices of French schools? This is looking at it from the point of view of the boys' interest; when we come to consider the masters' share in the business, it might reasonably be doubted whether they gain in dignity or influence by this part of their duties, which to some otherwise able teachers must be painfully disagreeable, whatever Mr. Squeers or Dr. Busby might think of it.

It is, after all, a matter of opinion, of custom, and still more perhaps of national character, giving room therefore for the difference observed in French and English feeling on the subject. If we take books written for schoolboys, appealing to

their sympathy, winning their admiration, we find that on our side the Channel a frequent and favourite incident is when the boy who has gone wrong gets found out and stands his thrashing like a man, perhaps resolving "never to do it again," anyhow submitting with a good grace to the power of law and authority. In French stories of the same kind the hero is more likely to figure as an ill-used innocent, who in the end puts his oppressors and calumniators to confusion, and figures nobly as the leader of an *émeute* against his masters, like Mar-montel in our story.

Several such stories could be mentioned from fact and fiction; one may be quoted here as an illustration of Mar-montel's, showing the French schoolboy's extreme sensitiveness to bodily correction, of which in past times, as we learn from Montaigne and other writers, he had plenty, whether he liked it or no. Another famous French author, Chateaubriand, relates with pride how at the age of eleven he made as much to do about being caned as if it would have killed him.

"One morning, in the month of May, the Abbé Egault, prefect for the week, had conducted us to this seminary. We were allowed great liberty at play, but were expressly forbidden to climb the trees. The prefect, after having brought us to a grassy spot, quitted us to repeat his breviary.

"The road was lined with elms: at the very summit of the tallest of these trees a magpie's nest caught our eye. We were in ecstasies, pointing out to each other the mother sitting upon her eggs, and were seized with an overwhelming desire to obtain possession of this splendid prize. But who would dare to risk the adventure? The orders were so peremptory, the prefect so near, the tree so high! All hopes were centred in me. I could climb like a cat. I hesitated, but the love of glory prevailed. I took off my jacket, and, clasping the elm, commenced the ascent. The trunk was without branches until about two-thirds of its height, from which issued a forked branch. On one of the points rested the nest.

"My comrades assembled beneath the tree applauded my efforts, looking alternately at me and in the direction whence the abbé might surprise us. Fluttering with joy at the hope of obtaining the eggs, and trembling with fear at the possibility of punishment, I approached the nest: the magpie took flight, I seized the eggs, put them into my bosom, and descended.

Unfortunately I attempted to slide down, my feet slipped round the elm, and I lost my footing. The tree being lopped I could not rest my feet either on the right side or on the left, in order to raise myself and catch hold of the upper branch ; and there I stuck fifty feet in the air.

"All at once there was a cry of 'The prefect ! the prefect !' and, as is usually the case, I saw myself faithlessly abandoned by my friends. One alone, named Le Gobbien, endeavoured to assist me, but he was soon obliged to give up his generous attempt. There was but one means of escaping from my vexatious position, which was that of suspending myself backwards, by catching, with my hands, one of the forks of the branch, and then endeavouring to seize with my feet the trunk of the tree below the bifurcation. This manœuvre I executed at the peril of my life. In the midst of my distress I did not cast away my treasure ; it would, however, have been wiser to have thrown it away than many others which I have since flung from me. In descending the trunk I skinned my hands, scratched my legs and breast, and broke the eggs ; it was this that betrayed me. The prefect had not seen me on the elm ; I could have concealed from him that my hands were bleeding, but there was no possibility of hiding the bright golden colour with which I was besmeared. 'Come along, sir !' exclaimed he ; 'you must be caned !'

"Had he announced to me that he would commute this punishment into a sentence of death I could have felt a sensation of joy. I had never experienced such an ignominy throughout my wild education. At any period of my life I should have preferred any punishment to the horror of being put to the blush before a fellow mortal. My breast heaved with indignation. I replied to the abbé in the tone of a man and not of a child, 'that neither he nor any other person should ever dare to raise his hand against me.' This answer provoked him ; he called me a rebel, and promised to make an example of me. 'We shall see,' I replied ; and began to play at ball with a *sang-froid* which confounded him.

"We returned to the college : the abbé made me enter his apartment, and ordered me to submit. My lofty bearing gave place to a torrent of tears. I represented to the abbé that he had taught me Latin—that I was his pupil, his disciple, his child—that surely he could not dishonour his child, and render

the sight of my companions insupportable to me—that he might put me in prison and feed me upon bread and water, deprive me of recreation, load me with *pensums*, that I should be grateful for his clemency, and love him all the better. I fell at his feet, clasped my hands, and besought him, in the name of Jesus Christ, to spare me ; but he was inexorable to my prayers and entreaties. I rose in a rage, and gave him such a violent kick on his shins, that he uttered a cry and ran limping to the door, which he double-locked and returned. I intrenched myself behind his bed. He struck at me with his ferula across it. I wrapped the quilt around me, and animating myself to the combat, cried out :

“ ‘ Macte animo, generose puer !’

This piece of boyish erudition made my opponent laugh in spite of himself. He proposed an armistice ; we concluded a treaty—I agreed to submit to the arbitration of the principal. Without acquitting me altogether, the principal made no difficulty in excusing me from the punishment which I held in such abhorrence. When the worthy priest pronounced my acquittal, I kissed the sleeve of his robe with so much fervour, and poured forth such heartfelt effusions of gratitude, that the good man could not help giving me his benediction. Thus terminated my first combat in the defence of that honour which had become the idol of my life, and to which I have so often sacrificed repose, pleasure, and fortune.”

Shall we not say, taking this and larger episodes of history into consideration, that our lively neighbours, while ready enough to play at bowls with fortune, are rather unfair in their impatience against the rubs which generally form part of the game ?

III.

His school career having come to such an abrupt end, our hero says nothing of any disapproval that may have been shown at home. He was able to go on with his studies by the aid of an old country priest, a distant relation of his, who happened to be staying at Bort. This priest, being luckily a man of some learning, began logic with him, and exercised him in speaking Latin ; when they went out walks they conversed

in no other language, so as to "improve each shining hour." But soon a disturbing influence made itself felt in this quiet course of life. It was the old story, not so often to be told of such an early age.

The young people of this Limousin Arcadia were in the way of walking about together on fine evenings, youths and maidens strolling side by side with innocent freedom, uniting their voices in sweet concerts by the light of the moon. A pretty and pastoral amusement this, but apt to become serious work. Cupid is much abroad by moonlight.

"The silver light which, hallowing tree and tower,
Sheds beauty and deep softness o'er the whole,
Breathes also to the heart, and o'er it throws
A loving languor which is not repose."

Hot southern blood, too, is precocious in such matters, and the result of these moonlight walks for Master Marmontel, was that at the age of fifteen he began to mark a certain Mademoiselle B—— as prettier and wittier than the rest of her companions, till from her lips even "good-day" and "good-night" dropped like precious pearls. We know what that means. As frequently appears in the phenomena of calf-love, the lady was a little older than her adorer. She also showed a more prudent and practical disposition; for when he opened his heart to her, while assuring him that his affection was not unrequited, she remarked that they were too young to marry yet, and that he would soon have to go back to school—indeed, that several years must be as good as wasted for her before he was in a position to settle.

This shrewd damsel evidently had in mind the proverbial inconstancy of the sterner sex. Men were deceivers ever, and could it be expected of her to sacrifice the flower of her youth to the sighs of an absent schoolboy? Marmontel recognised the justness of her objection. "But at least promise me," said he, "never to marry without consulting my mother, nor without asking her whether I have not some hope to offer you!" She gave the promise with a charming smile, and becoming engaged on such terms, they abandoned themselves in right Arcadian fashion to all the pleasures of ingenuous and innocent first love, that magic mirage that so often comes to nothing. "Our private walks, our most interesting conversations, were passed in imagining for me possibilities of future success or fortune

that might favour our wishes ; but as these sweet illusions succeeded each other like dreams, the one effaced the other, and after they had delighted us for a moment, we finished by weeping over them, as children weep when a breath overturns the house of cards they have built."

But the course of true love was not to run smoother for this couple than for others : thus crabbed fate revenges itself on the happiness of lovers. Marmontel's mother heard of the courtship, and naturally looked on it with some uneasiness. Her old aunts, with a sour touch of the spinster, went still further in disapproval of such doings, woman-like laying all the blame on the offender of their own sex, in whom it seemed a crime to have charmed their darling boy. One of these aunts came upon the youthful pair billing and cooing in a meadow by the river side, and took the opportunity of giving that hussy a piece of her mind, not sparing unjust and cruel words ; the old maid's manners had clearly not that repose which marks the caste of Vere de Vere, nor that refinement which is attributed to the young people of Bort. Then came a moving scene ; the girl wept, the boy raged and wept at once. In vain did he fall at her knees, ask her pardon for his ill-tongued relation, entreat her to despise and forget this injury. "I am indeed wretched !" she exclaimed, "for they accuse me of having led you astray, and of wishing to unsettle you. Fly me—see me no more—no, I never wish to see you again !" With these words she left him—for ever !

Forbidden to follow her, the lad ran home mad with fury, his air wild, his eyes on fire, his head all in a whirl. He rushed upstairs to his room, locked himself in, and set to beating his skull against the wall. Here was an "Ercles' vein" for a youngster of fifteen ! Luckily his father happened to be not at home, but his anxious mother hastened up to see what was the matter. She had to order him to open the door. "Pardon me," he cried, "I am desperate. I no longer know myself. I am not master of my feelings. Spare me the shame of thus appearing before you." But when she insisted on entering, he laid his bruised head and his wounded heart on her bosom ; she bathed him with tears and raised such an outcry that all the women in the house came to swell the flood of emotion, except one, the wicked aunt who had already confessed her crime, and while her nephew bruised his

forehead above, was now busy below in "tearing her hair for the grief she had caused."

The sympathetic woe of these good women, the deluge of tears by which he was surrounded, the "tender and timid groans" that responded to his lamentable outbursts, softened our lovesick hero's heart, and made his anger subside. But he was still in such a state of excitement, that it seemed desirable to bleed him, after the medical practice of that day. When the lancet had done its work he felt relieved, and able to explain himself coherently. Like a true Frenchman, he poured out all his troubles to his mother, and she, like a true mother, could not withstand her boy's wishes. She confessed her fault: it was her dislike to the engagement with Mademoiselle B—— that had "disordered the aunts' mind;" if he refused to pardon them, he must condemn his mother too. Then he threw his arms round her, and pressed her to his breast.

He had gone to bed at her desire, and lay still in such a high fever, that the doctor fetched to him, knowing not the true character of his ailment, proposed a second bleeding. His mother got a respite from this till evening, and in the meanwhile recommending him a little sleep, went out to seek the best remedy in the pharmacopœia of human nature. Soon she returned, accompanied—by whom? The reader will easily guess. It was the charming girl herself, that appeared to assure her sweetheart that she was no longer offended, that her pardon had been asked and granted. There was a scene of warm reconciliation all round.

"My mother made her sit down by my bedside; and while I heard and looked at her, a pure and gentle calm overflowed my soul. She had the kindness, too, to appear to favour our happy dreams; and while she recommended prudence and piety to us both, 'Who knows,' said she, 'what heaven has in reserve for you? It is just; you are both honestly born; and love may even render you still more worthy of being happy.' 'These,' said Mademoiselle B——, 'are kind consoling words, and proper to calm your thoughts! As for me, you see that I retain neither anger nor resentment. Your aunt, whose vivacity had wounded me, has testified her regret; I have been fully reconciled to her; and will not you, who are so good, embrace her?' 'Yes, with all my heart,' answered I; and in an instant the good aunt came, bathing my bed with her tears.

In the evening the physician found my pulse still rather quick, but perfectly regular."

'Tis said that men have died for love, but it takes a very excitable nature, surely, to beat one's head against the wall at the age of fifteen for a young lady's feelings! After such an outburst, we may be surprised to learn that not Venus but Minerva was in the ascendant with our hero. His father presently returned from a journey to Clermont, the chief town of Auvergne, and announced that he had got a place in the counting-house of a merchant there for his son. "He has had enough of Latin; it is time to think of giving him some useful employment." The mother earnestly protested against this decision, having set her heart upon her boy's becoming a scholar, and in the end something more distinguished than a merchant; but the son persuaded her to consent. He had a plan of his own in view. By sticking closely to business, he might soon be in a position to marry Mademoiselle B——, and live happily all the rest of their days. But not for riches nor for love was he willing to give up his books.

So, going to Clermont, he informed his new master that he proposed to reserve an hour and a half of his time, morning and evening, for study, assuring the merchant that all the rest of the day should be his. The man of business would not hear of such an arrangement. Marmontel would have argued the point like Jack Easy, pointing out that eight hours' assiduous application ought to satisfy any employer; more than this would make the life, not of a clerk, but of a slave. The merchant bluntly answered that he could go and be more free elsewhere. The youth forthwith took him at his word, and walked out to follow his own course upon a capital of two three-franc pieces, given him by his father as pocket-money, with a few smaller coins which the fond grandmother had slipped into his hand on bidding him farewell.

Now he would have to reckon with his father, and it occurred to him that his mother might be blamed for encouraging him to this rash act of independence. Agitated and depressed, he entered a church and betook himself to prayer to calm his mind. There, as by inspiration, a thought struck him that at once changed all the prospects of his life—curious that it had never come to him before in the Jesuit college! He would enter the Church in another sense, making a priest of himself,

who would have no need of filthy lucre, still less of a wife. Poor Mademoiselle B—— ! She was left out of consideration in the pious fervour of the moment. There was a college at Clermont much larger than that of Mauriac. Here the class teaching was supplemented by that of private tutors or *répétiteurs*, an order of assistant-masters, who, under the name of *maîtres d'études*—in schoolboy slang *pions*—play a not very enviable part in the staff of modern French Lycées. Marmontel's hopes were founded on the chance of getting some such employment to help him in completing his own studies. He began at once by hiring for ten sous a week a little garret near the college, its whole furniture consisting of a bed, a table, and a chair. To this he added such utensils as might suit an anchorite's household, and laid in a provision of bread, water, and plums. Plainer living and higher thinking than ever must now be the rule for him.

Having eaten his first frugal supper at this cheerless home, and spent an anxious night, next day he wrote two letters, one to his mother, dwelling on the "cruelty" of the inflexible merchant ; the other to his father, in which he pathetically entreated him not to oppose his resolution of consecrating himself to the Church, and spoke of his hope to be no longer any expense to the family ; he asked only the paternal consent and blessing. The mother was easily won by these pleadings ; she saw her son's sacred career "traced out by angels and beaming with light, like Jacob's ladder." The father's piety, too, as the boy calculated, was not proof against such an appeal. He forgave his son, and let the mother write that they agreed to his wishes. With this she sent him a little money, which, however, he was soon able to return. For the meanwhile he was rich in faith and hope, with which youth can live happily upon a very small allowance of bread and plums.

He had now to present himself at the college, where his attestations from Mauriac would at once procure him entrance to the class of philosophy, an intermediate course between school work and the theological studies necessary for his vocation. But such a commonplace mode of proceeding by no means fell in with our hero's views. He was minded to be examined by way of calling attention to his merits, to enter the scholastic lists as an unknown knight and then raise astonishment at the style in which he could handle his weapons.

For this purpose we must regret to find him telling a fib, or what is even worse, showing here as elsewhere that he was a master in the art of deceiving himself. A great deal of high-flown talk about virtuous sentiments may, it seems, be quite compatible with neglect of the plain catechism duties which go to make our insular idea of a good boy. If Montaigne, indeed, is to be believed, lying has from the most ancient times been reckoned among the French not so much a vice as a fashion of speech—even a virtue at times !

He addressed himself to the prefect, or superintendent of the college, desiring admission to the philosophy class.

“‘Where do you come from?’ demanded he. ‘From Bort, father.’ ‘And where have you studied?’ Here I suffered myself to use some evasion. ‘I have been studying,’ said I, ‘with a country curate.’ A sign of disdain was visible on his brows and lips ; and, opening a book of exercises, he proposed to me one in which there was no difficulty. I did it with a stroke of the pen, and with some elegance. ‘How,’ said he, on reading it, ‘have you had a country curate for your master?’ ‘Yes, father.’ ‘This evening you shall translate.’ It chanced to be part of an oration of Cicero that I had seen when in rhetoric ; I therefore translated it without difficulty, and as quickly as I had done the exercise. ‘And is it, indeed,’ said he, on reading my translation, ‘at a country curate’s that you have studied?’ ‘You must plainly perceive it,’ said I. ‘That I may see it still better, to-morrow you shall compose a theme.’ In this prolonged examination, I thought I discovered a curiosity that was favourable to me. The subject he proposed to me was not less encouraging ; it was the regret at parting of a boy that leaves his parents for school. What more analogous to my situation, and to the affections of my soul ! I would I could recollect the expression I gave to the feelings of the son and mother. Those words, dedicated by nature, and whose eloquent simplicity art can never imitate, were watered with my tears, which the master perceived. But what most astonished him (for there truth itself resembled invention) was the passage where, rising above myself, I made the youth address his father, and tell him of the courage he felt to become, one day, by force of application and study, the consolation, the support, and honour of his old age ; and of restoring to his other children what his education had cost.

'And you have studied at a country curate's!' exclaimed my Jesuit, yet more loudly. For this time I was silent, and only cast down my eyes. 'And,' resumed he, 'has your country curate also taught you to write in verse?' I answered that I had some idea of the art, but very little practice. 'That is what I should be glad to know,' said he, smiling. 'Come this evening before the lecture hour.' The subject of the verses was, '*What is the difference between feigning and lying?*' This was precisely an excuse that he, perhaps intentionally, offered me.

"I studied to represent feigning as a pure, or an innocent artifice; an ingenious art of amusing, in order to instruct; sometimes even a sublime art, to embellish truth herself, to render her more amiable, more impassioned, and more attractive, by lending her a thin transparent veil, covered with flowers. In lying, it was easy for me to show the baseness of the mind that betrayed its feeling or its judgment; and the impudence of the crafty knave, that perverts and disfigures truth, in order to impose, and whose language bears the character of trick, malice, fraud, and dishonour.

"'Now, tell me,' said the adroit Jesuit, 'whether you lied, or feigned, when you told me that a country curate had been your master?—for I am almost certain that you have studied with *us* at Mauriac.'

Marmontel was now obliged to confess the truth, adding that he meant all along to come out with it in the end, and justifying himself by the necessity of making a living, which had driven him to this ruse for a chance of displaying his talents. Such an excuse would have found little favour in the eyes of any English head-master; perhaps a Jesuit might be expected to show more tolerance to this "economy of truth." We need not sneer at the Jesuits; they had virtues of their own; but straightforward honesty was certainly not the strong point of that Order. When the aspiring pupil-teacher finished by demanding "what every man in misfortune may ask without blushing—employment and bread!" the prefect only objected very reasonably that he looked rather young to be set over other boys. To this Marmontel sententiously replied that misfortune could be relied on to ripen years and to take the place of experience—the precocious young monkey, whose worst misfortune as yet had been such as a million other boys take much

as a matter of course, and are not often much the wiser ! He stuck to his petition. "Try me ; you will, perhaps, find my character sufficiently grave to make you forget my youth." The prefect said he would think about it. Marmontel took upon himself to remark that no consideration was necessary : let him be put at once on the list of private tutors of the school, and furnished with pupils—no matter from what class—he would answer for their getting on with him. To such importunity, what could the prefect do but promise, though "rather feebly," that it should be so ? Then the young gentleman went off to begin his course of logic. Hitherto, however much he may have shone in rhetoric, there has appeared a certain want of logic, not to say common sense, in his mode of reasoning.

From the first day, he fancied that the professor of logic marked him out as no ordinary youth. His studies with the country curate are stated to have given him an advantage over his new comrades, especially the habit of speaking Latin, through which language all lessons in the class of philosophy were carried on. He, for his part, took good care to put himself forward, and not keep his talents hid under a bushel. After all, they seemed not to have made such a forcible impression on the prefect. Weeks went by without any news of pupils, and all the while poor Marmontel's scanty funds were running low, save and starve as he could. Sometimes he placed himself in the great man's way, and bowed to him with a suppliant air, but was scarcely noticed, as is so often the case with the salutations of a suitor. Then he would retire sadly to his garret, and make his hermit-like supper in tears. 'Fortunately I had excellent bread.'

It was a woman that was to put him in the way of making himself valued. One of his fellow lodgers—a good little lady named Madame Clement—observed that this youth had neither friends nor fire to cheer him, and easily guessed that food was not too abundant, either, in his little room at the top of the house. With womanly kindness, and, perhaps, a spice of feminine curiosity, she paid him a visit to see how he got on. He had to confess to her good-natured inquiries that for the present he was not very well off, but added that things would soon be better with him, explaining his prospects from the college authorities.

"Ah, your Jesuits!" said she. "They have something very different in their heads; they will lull you with promises and leave you to languish. Why don't you go to Riom, to the Oratorians? They will give you fewer fine words, but will do more for you than they promise." This lady, it may be remarked, was a Jansenist, that sect in the Roman Church which is at the very opposite pole from the Jesuits.

Touched with the interest she showed in him, Marmontel asked for further information about these Oratorians, which she gave him forthwith over a good dinner in her own apartments. Emboldened by two or three small glasses of wine, and enlightened by learning from his new friend of the jealous rivalry that existed between the Jesuit and the Oratorian schools, our sly youth was at no loss for a plan of action.

This happened to be a holiday; he went at once to see the prefect, who seemed rather surprised to see him. On his inquiry as to the cause of this unexpected visit, Marmontel announced that he had come to take leave, giving him to understand that he had been invited to Riom, where the Oratorian Fathers would know how to provide for such a promising pupil. This story, as we see, was not quite true, but it had an immediate effect. The Jesuit's *esprit de corps* at once took fire at this risk of letting one who might prove such an ornament to the Order get into the hands of their rivals. What! He, educated in their schools, going to desert them for those artful priests who had such a knack of seducing credulous young men! Well, how could he help it? he must live; employment must be given him. Of course: the Prefect had been thinking about it; he would see; something would turn up; at any rate, he must not go! Straightway he took the lad off to his professor, that they might unite their remonstrances. "Those dangerous Oratorians want to make a convert of him. He is about to ruin himself; we must save him."

At this news the professor was even more concerned than the prefect. There was no more indifference to Marmontel's claims. They both told wonders of him to all the masters, and in a month he had twelve pupils at four francs a-piece. How often this four francs was payable he does not say; but it formed an income which enabled him to move into a better lodging, to improve his fare, and to subscribe to a library. At Easter he could afford to clothe himself decently in the dress

of an abbé, so as to make an imposing figure among the mere schoolboys, who would be very unlike their descendants if they were disposed to show over-much veneration for the character of a *maître répétiteur*, or what may be called a non-commissioned dominie.

His friend the Jansenist lady was not satisfied with this turn in her young neighbour's fortunes. "Ah!" she declared, "it is at Riom that youths make good and holy studies." But Marmontel was exceedingly well satisfied with himself in the new dignity of his ecclesiastical costume. Mindful of the manners of his old model, that unpleasantly superior person, Master Amalvy, he now laid himself out to be exclusive and reserved in bestowing the favour of his acquaintance. There were four of them in the school, who formed a sort of mutual improvement society, holding aloof from the common herd, as became their merits. They read and walked together, talked about nothing but their work, partook of no frivolous amusements, and had no greater pleasure than a visit to the venerable Massillon at the country house of the bishop of the diocese. *Vidi tantum*, Marmontel might henceforth say of this great orator.

Having finished his course of logic after a year's hard work, in which he had to teach duller boys from three different classes as well as carry on his own studies, our hero thought himself fairly entitled to a holiday. It was with no small pride that he arrived at home in his abbé's dress, with a store of little presents for his sisters, and money in his pocket to spare, all the fruit of his own industry. The hope of the family, whose revolt against paternal authority had been so justified by success, was received with a great effusion of joy, tears of course not being wanting.

There was one old friend, however, who could not be expected to receive him with open arms. Our young abbé had the grace to feel some embarrassment as to meeting Mademoiselle B——, hardly knowing how he ought to behave towards the young lady to whom he had certainly been "not faithless but inconstant," a subtle distinction worthy of a Jesuit scholar! He consulted his mother on this delicate point. Even a mother's fondness was fain to confess that his forsaken flame had some right to be displeased with her son, who would just have to bear the damsel's resentment and disdain as best

he could. "You must, on all occasions, show her the tenderest esteem, and treat with infinite attention a heart you have wounded." After all, the Ariadne of Bort proved herself as reasonable as she had formerly been sagacious; without compromising her self-respect, she did not make any outcry over the spilt milk of youthful vows; and the ex-lovers conducted themselves towards each other with great politeness, carefully avoiding any private conversation, which could not but have been painful on both sides.

His next home-coming was a sad one. After another year's severe application, he had finished his course of philosophy with honour, and, according to custom, was partaking of a collation given by the professor to celebrate the occasion, when it surprised him to observe that his friends, instead of overwhelming him with congratulations, looked on him as if there were rather cause for pity. At this moment of triumph, the professor had to break bad news to him. His father was dead.

Stunned by the blow, it was a quarter of an hour before he "recovered life and tears." Poor lad! this time we will not grudge him his tears. His first thought was of his mother. Impatient to comfort her, he yet durst not begin a journey by night through the mountains of Auvergne. With daylight he set off upon a hired horse, which carried him slowly over those twelve long leagues of the melancholy way. It was midnight before he reached his mother's door. Then ensued a scene for the finest writing and talking.

"I knock, I pronounce my name, and instantly I hear a plaintive murmur and a mixture of groaning voices. All the family get up, the door is opened, and, on entering, I am encircled by my weeping friends; mother, children, old helpless women, all almost naked, dishevelled, resembling spectres, and extending their arms to me, with cries that pierce and rend my heart. I know not what force, a force that nature surely reserves for extreme misery, suddenly displayed itself within me: I never felt so superior to myself. I had to raise an enormous weight of grief; I did not sink under it. I opened my arms, my bosom to these wretched creatures; I received them all with the assurance of a man inspired by heaven, and without manifesting weakness, without shedding a tear; I who wept so easily! 'Mother, brothers, sisters, we experience,'

said I, 'the greatest of afflictions ; let it not overcome us. Children, you lose a father, and you find one ; I am he—I will be a father to you ; I adopt all his duties ; you are no longer orphans !' ”

We need not go on to tell how manfully he fulfilled this promise, after recovering from a severe illness brought on by the violence of his grief. With such a large family on his hands, it is now time for our hero to have done with boyhood. Presently, indeed, we find him lecturing on philosophy to a class of students most of whom had beards, but who were much impressed by the learning and self-possession of their juvenile professor. He was soon able to support himself and to help the others, which is more than some youths of his age could do who may be inclined to laugh at him as a precocious little pedant.

After all, though he took the first step towards it by receiving the tonsure, his career was not to be that of a Churchman. In a fit of enthusiasm he had very nearly enlisted himself as a Jesuit, like so many other youths of high-tuned nature. But his mother persuaded him out of this, and he turned aside into scholarship, teaching, literature. His true vocation seemed to be indicated by remarkable success in the poetical competitions of the Academy of Floral Games at Toulouse, that quaint relic of the troubadour days, when European poetry had its early spring on the sunny soil of Languedoc. By-and-by, at the invitation of Voltaire, the high-priest of French letters of that day, he found his way to Paris and joined the body of writers who more or less consciously were digging a mine that before the century was out would explode beneath the rotten fabric of Church and State, to make room for the tramp of Napoleon's armies.

Marmontel wrote several books, very famous once, in that style of stilted and sentimental morality which was the delight of our grandfathers, though our practical and critical age has little patience with it. His best-known work is the romance of "Belisarius," in which he called down upon himself the horrified censure of his old friends the priests, by advocating such doctrines of toleration and freedom of opinion as are now common-places to all sensible men of whatever creed. But of all his writings, none is so interesting to our generation as this autobiography, where he naively reveals his own character, and

with it perhaps a not untrue picture of the character of his nation: vain, kindly, excitable, gentle and fierce by turns—"pleased with thyself, whom all the world can please"—all the world except England with its fogs, and Germany with its too stern discipline!

Such outlines of national character are tolerably well marked in most peoples of Europe, though the difference between men is never so clear as their likeness when we come to look for it. Those popular judgments and sweeping reproaches with which we and our neighbours jeer one another, have generally a certain basis of truth in them, however they may be exaggerated by ignorance and prejudice. There is justice in the good-natured irony of a certain poet who tells us :

"France is the land of sober common-sense,
And Spain of intellectual eminence.
Supreme at Rome enlightened reason reigns;
In Russia there are no such things as chains.
Unbounded liberty is Austria's boast,
And iron Prussia is as free—almost.
America, that stationary clime,
Boasts of tradition and the olden time.
England, the versatile and gay,
Rejoices in theatrical display.
The sons of Scotia are impulsive, rash,
Infirm of purpose, prodigal of cash.
But Paddy ——"

Ah, how can we finish the jest, when there is so little to laugh at in the troubles of poor Ireland!

This book is written for boys, yet not for silly boys who can't stomach a word of sense. They are not to go away from the present story with a notion of despising Frenchmen because their ways and thoughts do not altogether square with ours. We have all our strong points and our weak ones, and it would be well if, according to the old fable, we kept a bag before us for our own faults, and one behind for those of our neighbours, seeing that we must do most to set ourselves right by contriving to see ourselves as others see us. French men and boys are not a bit more complimentary to us than we are to them; both of us have some reason to find fault with the other, as well as, if we knew it, to lay to heart those failings which are caricatured over the Channel.

John Bull and Jacques Bonhomme exhibit their points of contrast like the rest of the world. This worthy loves brilliance,

neatness, dash ; that honest fellow believes in solidity, serviceability, perseverance. How does it look ? is the first consideration of the one ; How does it work ? of the other. The one thinks too much of the shadow, the other is rather greedy of the substance. If the one has often gone eagerly astray after airy abstractions, deceitful will-o'-the-wisps that have led him floundering into terrible quagmires, the other has had his sense of the ideal somewhat "fattened out of him," and forgets that it is not the sum of wisdom to see clearly one inch before his nose, but no further. Haste is not always speed, nor does slow always prove sure. The effervescence of the Frenchman has sometimes left a sad sediment ; yet the temperament of his neighbour is apt to be somewhat muddy in its steadiness. One of these rivals in freedom and enlightenment has been in too great a hurry to make the beautiful his own without being sure that he had got firm hold of the true ; the other, sniffing suspiciously at fine words which butter no parsnips, has been sometimes too slow to recognise that life is not all matter-of-fact. The one has aimed higher and has oftener missed his mark ; the other, as yet, has been more successful, even when he seemed less to deserve it. By all the rules of warfare, we are told, the French ought to have won the battle of Waterloo ; but somehow they didn't. They set about colonizing America, but that business got into other hands. They started like the hare in the race for civil liberty ; we have got ahead like the tortoise. So, on the whole, it appears as if those different qualities forming the British nature, fitted in more closely to the order of things, to which all men in the long run must adapt themselves.

What a character would that of the French and of the English make if united in one ! If we could only blend the fire of one with the strength of the other—French vivacity, sensibility, wit, with English sturdiness, sense, humour—we should have the model man of the world. Some day, we hear, there is to be a tunnel between France and England, which cannot but increase their traffic in the best that one has to exchange with the other. Meanwhile, let us trust that the two nations are coming to understand each other better every day, as it is the true wisdom of all civilized nations to do ; and that Waterloo begins to be as dusty a memory as Fontenoy is, as Sedan will be when time has healed those sore wounds.



A SCHOOLBOY OF THE OLDEN TIME.

I.



HERE is no royal road to learning, we are truly told : long at the best, often weary, nor ever wholly free from stones and briers, will be the path by which youth advances to any height of scholarship, to be at last able to enjoy some small outlook upon the wisdom of ages. The most favoured child of fortune must have his wrestlings with the alphabet and the multiplication table ; nay, there are grimmer foes, on which few of us, in these days of compulsory education, have leave to turn our backs. So it has been, and so it always will be, as long as human nature takes less readily to its lessons than to its meals. Yet much, we must own, has been done in smoothing the way for tender feet through what once was such an appalling wilderness, and in paring the claws of those ruthless monsters that of old so commonly infested it. The schoolboy of to-day little thinks what his lot might have been, had it been cast a few generations earlier. These smart and not too modest young gentlemen of ours, who run down to Eton and Harrow by express trains, with as few tears as their grandfathers used to shed at the beginning of the holidays ; who have the best of tutors, grammars, graduses and the like, always at hand to help them over every scholastic stile ; who grumble when they get roast mutton too often for dinner, and clamour if they don't get hot dishes at breakfast ; for whom the time-honoured birch is fast becoming a mere vain symbol, like the sceptre of the monarch or the dress-

sword of the court chamberlain ; who spend in pocket-money and amusement more than has kept many a famous student in food, clothes, books, and all ; who never in their lives have known what it was to want a quire of paper or a warm overcoat—these young Sybarites of learning, as they are by comparison, for all their fagging customs and football scrimmages, should they find themselves not duly thankful for the blessings of fortune, would do well to consider what a thing might be going to school two or three hundred years ago, as exemplified, for instance, in the autobiography of one who went through a painful, yet by no means uncommon, experience of that rough apprenticeship to polite letters.

In the last year of the fifteenth century, when the great revival of learning was thawing men's minds, so long frost-bound in the ignorance of the Middle Ages, and sowing the seed which would soon bear fruit in the Reformation, a boy named Thomas Platter came into this changing world near the village of Grenchen, in the Canton of St. Gall. He was a Swiss boy, then, born heir to that freedom which his bold fathers had wrested from the men-at-arms of Austria and Burgundy, bred among that romantic scenery which has now become "the playground of Europe," though, in his days, the inhabitants thought more of the dangers and poverty than of the grandeur and beauty of their wild mountains. His family seems not to have been rich, and was soon to be poorer ; better off once, hints Master Thomas, but ruined by usurers, who, with the bad security of a troubled time, would naturally exact ruinous interest. The women of that frugal folk spent their long winter evenings in spinning and weaving wool, to be made up into stout doublets and hose for the peasants ; and in autumn the men used to visit the richer district of Berne to buy these fleeces, which their own rough-haired goats did not afford them. On such a journey our boy's father took the plague, and died away from home, when Thomas was still too young to remember him. But he remembers his maternal grandfather, Hans Summermatter, whom he rather incredibly assures us to have reached the venerable age of a hundred and twenty-six, yet not by ten to have been the oldest man in the parish ! This patriarch, we are also told, married a second wife when he was just a century old, and had another baby, with a progeny of grey-haired children already grown up about him !

Thomas himself had plenty of brothers and sisters—how many, he cannot exactly tell. After his father's death, the widow marrying again, her first family became broken up. The sons had to take service as soon as they could shift for themselves, and two of them at least were killed in battle: thus early was hardy Switzerland breeding soldiers for all the wars of Europe. Little Thomas himself, the Benjamin of the family, came to be more or less taken charge of by his father's sisters, and his first childish recollections belong to the home of one of these aunts, at a place called "In the wild," near his native village. His mother could not or would not even nurse him; he grew up to tumble about for himself upon milk given him through a small horn, which was his diet for four or five years.

It was a rough up-bringing, at the best, in which weaklings were likely to be killed-off without much help from doctors or nurses. Such incidents as he recalls from these early years show how children are the same in all times and places. Once his aunt had laid him on a table warmly wrapped in a truss of straw while she went to mass; then what must the lively little imp do but get up and run through the snow naked, so that he was found in another house well-nigh frozen to death, if it had not been for the friendly care of the neighbours! Again, his eldest brother came home from the Savoy Wars, all scars and steel, bringing with him, the kind warrior, a little wooden horse for Tommy, who drew it along by a thread before the door, and remembers well how he thought it could really walk. The big fierce brother was playful also; he passed one leg over the little fellow's head, and said, "Oho, Tomilin, now you will never grow any more!" Centuries of high deeds, all these crowded historical pictures of men-at-arms in battle, and princes in counsel, seem for the moment to grow dim beside such touches of childish reminiscence, as fresh as if they came from yesterday. Another time the urchin, now able to run about and make his way wherever he was not wanted, appears in the character of a true boy, heedless of forms and proprieties. A great dignitary of the Church, no less than a cardinal, had come to Grenchen to confirm the young people, for which rite our Thomas was in due time to be presented by a relative of his, a priest, who had undertaken to act as his godfather. But as soon as the cardinal had dined and gone into the church, this small catechumen presented himself all alone,

impatient to have the matter over at once, that he might make sure of the customary present from his godfather. He found the cardinal sitting in solitary state, who was naturally surprised to see him present himself so unceremoniously, and asked him what he wanted. "I should like to be confirmed," said the unabashed child. This good-natured Churchman was not offended, but inquired his name, and gave him a gentle slap on the cheek ; then, when the godfather appeared, full of apologies and indignation at such forwardness, the cardinal said a word for his little friend, remarking, "That child will surely become something wonderful, perhaps a priest."

He was by no means the first to predict this honour for our hero. As Thomas had been born on Shrove Tuesday while the bells were ringing for mass, many of the superstitious gossips declared him destined to the priesthood. But there were difficulties in the way. The needful schooling, little as that was, did not lie at every Swiss peasant's door. The country was demoralized by its long struggle for independence, and the petty civil wars which had from time to time sprung up among this restless armed population, who found so much to do in wringing a bare livelihood from their native rocks, as well as in defending them now against foreign tyrants, now against quarrelsome neighbours, that they were little able to cultivate learning. Then the poverty of the family urged that Thomas should be doing something betimes for his own support. So at the age of six he began life as a goatherd in the service of his mother's brother-in-law.

A hard life this was for such a young one. Often nearly lost in the snow, he was just able to struggle out, leaving his shoes behind him, and run home barefoot. He had charge of about eighty goats : when he opened their stable-door of a morning, and was not quick enough in springing aside, the impetuous herd, rushing forth, would knock him down and scamper over his little body. As soon as he had let them loose, the foremost of the provoking creatures would be into the corn-field ; and while Thomas with legs, arms and voice was driving them out, others would come running in, till the poor boy fell a-crying in despair, knowing well that he must expect a beating from the farmer for these faults of his unruly charge. Sometimes the older goatherds goodnaturedly helped him, especially one friend and namesake, a certain Thomas of Leidenbach, who



THE LITTLE GOATHERD.

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is gratefully remembered as showing him much kindness. It was a treat to be up the "frightful mountains" with these strong comrades, eating together their frugal supper of cheese and rye-bread, or watching them shoot for a trial of skill. But one day, in the excitement of such a contest, little Thomas fell backwards over a steep rock, and it was a wonder to all when he climbed up again unhurt.

Another time, following his wilful goats, he found himself on the edge of a rocky abyss more than a thousand fathoms deep. Even the goats could hardly get footing here, but they must needs mount higher, and when the child had drawn himself a step or two upwards by the scanty roots of grass which struggled to grow on the rock, he could go no further, nor durst let himself fall on the narrow ledge behind. There he hung, clutching with both hands at one little tuft, and resting his toes by turns on another, in terror of being carried away by the great vultures that soared among these lofty heights. The wind blew out behind the skirts of his only garment, for he had no breeches on, and luckily his friend big Thomas caught sight of this poor little scrap of a shirt or coat-tail fluttering in the air. At first he took it for a bird, but when he saw what was the matter, the kind man turned white with fear, and ran up, crying, "Tomilin, stand still!" Hastily he climbed the ledge of rock, clasped the boy in his arms and put him in safety.

Years afterwards, when Tomilin had come out as a scholar, this goatherd reminded him how he had saved his life, and claimed in return his prayers if he became a priest. Thomas Platter never became a priest, but in due time married a wife, to whom, as he declares with pride, his first master afterwards said that "young and small as I was, he never had a better little servant."

But he did not remain long in this man's service. There was one of his aunts to whose care his father had specially commended him as a baby. When she heard what sort of a place he had, and how people said that he would be sure to kill himself one day with a fall, she came to his master and protested that the child must not stay with him any longer. So he was brought back to Grenchen, and placed with another farmer there. Still his task was to mind goats; but the country about was not so dangerous, and now he had a little assistant and playfellow in the person of his new master's daughter. Is

it any wonder if these small herds sometimes took to play with such absorption as to forget to mind the goats? One day an alarming adventure arose from their idly amusing themselves beside an artificial watercourse. Here is the story :

"There had we made little meadows, and watered them, as children do. Meanwhile were the goats gone up the mountain, we knew not whither. Then left I my jacket lying there, and went up the mountain to the very top. But the little maid went home without the goats ; but I, who was a poor servant boy, durst not go home, for I had not the goats. Very high up I saw a young chamois that was like one of my goats, and I followed after it till the sun went down. When I looked back to the village, where it was almost night over the houses, I began to go down, but it was soon quite dark ; yet crept I from one larch-tree to another, and held on by the loose roots, for some roots were bare where the earth had been rubbed off by going over them. But when it became quite dark, and I found that was very dangerous, I thought I would not slip down any further, but held by the left hand to a root, while with the other I scratched away the earth under a tree, listening how the clods rolled down. I forced myself into this hollowed place under the roots. I had nothing on but a little shirt, neither shoes nor hat, for my jacket I had left by the watercourse from anxiety about the loss of the goats. As I lay there under the tree the ravens became aware of me, and croaked upon the tree, so I was in a great fright, for I thought there must be a bear about. I crossed myself, and fell asleep, and lay sleeping till the morning sun shone all over the mountains. But when I awoke and saw where I was, I don't think I was ever so terrified in my life, for had I gone only two fathoms further down, I must have fallen over a gruesome precipice thousands of fathoms deep. Then was I in great trouble how to get away from there ; yet let I myself down from one root to another, till I came to where I could run down the mountain to the houses. When I was just out of the wood and near the farms, a little maid met me with my goats, which she was driving out again ; for they had come home of themselves the night before, whereat the people whom I served were much frightened because I had not come back with the goats, thinking I must have fallen and killed myself."

Thus all was well that ended well ; but the good folks had

suffered so much anxiety on Thomas's account, that henceforth they would not let him go out with the goats any more. Other accidents are recorded as having nearly put a stop to his life long before it got the length of autobiography. Once he fell into a caldron of hot milk standing by the fire, and scalded himself so badly that he never lost the marks. Another time, he and a comrade were talking, like children as they were, among other things wishing they could fly, for then they would fly over the mountains into the unknown regions beyond, when, all of a sudden, a frightfully large bird came swooping down upon them. Vultures and eagles were sometimes known to carry away lambs, or even children, so the little goatherds had reason to be alarmed; screaming out, they made the sign of the cross, and defended themselves with their shepherd's crooks till the bird flew away, and left them at leisure to draw a moral from this incident, namely, that they had done wrong in wishing to be able to fly, since God had not created them for flying, but for walking. Again, Thomas was in a crevice looking for crystals, when a stone, "as large as a stove," came bounding down the mountain-side and sprung over him as he threw himself on his face in the hollow. Going without shoes generally in summer, or with clumsy wooden *sabots* at the best, seldom had he "whole toes, but often great bruises and many bad falls." His food was porridge made of rye-meal in the morning, cheese and rye-bread carried in a little basket at his back, and cheese-milk when he came home to supper. Then, tired out, he was glad to fling himself upon a heap of hay, or a straw mattress full of vermin. Such were the comforts of a goat-herd's life.

II.

THE goats having proved too much for our hero, he entered the service of another farmer, still one of the family, who set him to mind cows. But, before long, one of his aunts interfered to lift him above this employment, proposing that he should be sent to his relative and godfather, the priest, Anthony Platter, to *learn the Scriptures*, as the phrase was for going to school. His master was dead against it; he thought very little of the boy's capacity, and declared he would learn nothing.

The aunt, however, insisted, full of hope that her nephew might yet become a pious priest ; and in the end she had her way.

In his tenth year, then, Thomas was placed under the care of this learned relative, and his school-life really began, not with much pleasure or profit. Anthony Platter was a dominie of the good old school, who judged not sparing the rod to be the great matter. Rough farmers and refractory goats made holiday-work compared with what the awkward little peasant had now to suffer at the hands of a passionate pedant. "He beat me barbarously, often taking me by the ears and dragging me from the ground. I would scream out like a stuck goat, so that often the neighbours came in crying to know if he was killing me outright." And with all this thrashing, the young beginner learnt nothing but to drone out a chant, and go about the village with his fellow-pupils, singing for alms, as Martin Luther and thousands of other German boys were doing about the same time. The proceeds of their beggary of course went to the master. Dotheboys Hall was nothing to this course of education.

Luckily for Thomas, it did not last long in his case. Another kinsman appeared upon the scene, a young fellow named Paul Summerratter, who as a travelling student had been wandering about the schools of Bavaria. Visiting his native district, he now undertook to take his little cousin with him as "fag," or apprentice to the same kind of life. Little knowing what a life it was, Thomas no sooner heard of this offer than he fell on his knees, praying God to help him away from the priest who taught him so little and beat him so much.

When Paul was ready to start, Thomas set out to join him at a neighbouring village. No hamper, no cake, no silver fork and spoon, did the young scholar carry with him : little but the clothes on his back. The best part of his belonging was a gold florin with which an uncle at whose house he had called on the road had "tipped" him. Probably he had never had so much money before. He carried it in his hand all the way, child-like, often looking at it to make sure he had it safe, till he came to Paul, who "took charge of it" for him. He soon found out that it was not his place to have money of his own. His part of the partnership would be to beg as they went, and all that he got thus must be shared with his big companion, who always took the lion's share of the coppers, while the little

"fag" was pretty sure to get the cream of what kicks were bestowed upon them. An excellent provider Paul now possessed, for his cousin's rustic simplicity and provincial accent had the effect of opening people's hearts and purses. They might well have been less liberal to the great hulking scholar appealing to their charity in person.

On these terms, then, the two comrades set out for Germany. Wonderful things were soon to meet the eyes of our untravelled Thomas. Spending his first night in an inn, he was much impressed by the look of the great white porcelain stove round which the guests were accustomed to huddle, a steaming crowd, in wet weather. As the moon shone upon it, Thomas thought it must be a large calf, and two bright tiles, or perhaps pieces of opaque mica, he took to be the eyes. Next morning he saw some geese for the first time. When they set upon him, cackling and hissing, he fairly ran away from them with a great cry, for "I thought it was the devil, who wanted to devour me." In Lucerne he wondered at the red-tiled roofs, so different from those of his country-side. At Zurich they remained some time, waiting for the rest of a party of scholars who were to go on in company. During this stay Thomas was still kept busy begging to support lazy Paul, and was still successful, since the Zurich folks had a kindness for his St. Gall accent. He was not so well used by one of his own country-people, who lodged in the same inn. This fellow, it seems, having a turn for cruelty, offered the boy a *sixer*, a small coin of the place, if he would take one smack from him on the bare flesh. Thomas agreed to the bargain; but when the bully got him down over a chair, he beat him to his heart's content; and after all asked for the *sixer* back as a loan, and never gave it him again. This was only a taste of the kind of treatment he was to get for the next few years among the rough companions with whom he had taken up his lot.

In the Middle Ages, when almost all scholars were poor, it was quite customary for youths who coveted the rare gift of learning to seek from public charity the means of pursuing their studies. Many a future bishop and doctor might then be seen begging by the roadside, or little better than begging, though the understanding was that the man of learning should use it in offering prayers for his benefactor; and even the Oxford man of the day, as we know from Chaucer, had

humbly to submit to the obligation that made it part of his curriculum—

“For the soul’s pray
Of them that gave him wherewith to scholay.”

Our university exhibitions and bursaries are a survival or rather a development of this state of things.

In Germany the poor scholars had become a more or less organized body, like the guild or union of a trade, paying obedience to laws of their own, and little enough, it would seem, to other authority. A main peculiarity of this institution, if so we may call it, was the freedom with which the students wandered about from one school to another, as choice or whim led them. Many of them must have spent no small part of their educational course upon such highways as existed in those days. They were divided into two very different classes, as sharply marked off as the prefects of an English public school are from the general run of lower boys. The seniors were called *Bacchants*, because as often as not they lived in riotous idleness on a mere pretence of scholarship. To support themselves in this jovial life, they were in the habit of taking for companions or *fags* as many small boys as they could persuade to share their fortunes, which juniors were known by the name of *a-b-c-shooters*, a facetious way of alluding to their duties in the partnership. They had, in fact, to beg or steal everywhere for the *Bacchants*, while submitting to the most shameful ill-usage at the will of these young masters, often more harsh than any pedagogue of the period.

The only comfort of the much-suffering little *fag* was that when his big tyrant came to enter a university, he in turn would have to go through a course of bullying and humiliation as a freshman, according to the barbarous fashions which have still left their traces in German university life.*

* These abuses, under the name of *Pennalism*, rose in the seventeenth century to such a height as to be denounced by a decree of the Diet of Ratisbon. In Barnard’s “Museum of Education” we find, translated from a German writer, the following account of the ill-treatment of freshmen, known as *Pennals* in the university slang of the period. “And, further, the younger students have been made to copy all sorts of writings, to wait, to go of errands, even ten and twenty miles and more. If one of these *maleferiati* and *Pennal-flayers* happens to choose to have something copied, the junior must be at hand to serve as his scribe; has he guests and friends with him, the young man must be there to wait; is there anything else to

The Bacchants, however, did not always get the length of real student-ship; no small proportion of them were or became worthless hulking vagabonds, who made learning an excuse for wandering about like gipsies in congenial idleness and dissipation. Some of them settled down for a time as the worthless kind of schoolmaster stigmatised by Luther, "who cost money enough, and yet teach their pupils nothing save to be asses like themselves."

At the best, such rolling stones could have gathered not much literary moss. We are going to see how this Paul Summermatter was on the tramp thus for years; but we shall not hear of his making great use of his opportunities. Now Thomas must tell his own story.

"After we had waited eight or nine weeks for our companions,

be done or to be obtained, or to be brought from any of the neighbouring villages, the young fellow must go at his order, and be his servant, messenger, and porter. Does he choose to walk, the junior must attend as his body-guard; is he stupidly drunk, the novice must not flinch nor budge from him, but must remain close at hand, as if he were his master, must serve him and help him along the street. Is he sick, the juniors must wait on him by turns, so that he need never be alone; does he wish for music, if the junior is skilled in it he must be his musician, all night long if he desires it. Is anything else whatever required, the new-comer is set about it, and he must be forthcoming, even if he were sick in bed from his discipline, and at midnight. Does the older student get into a quarrel or a fight, the junior must carry his sword to him, and be ready for assiduous service in the matter. Would he gratify his vile desires with blows, the junior must suffer the blows and boxes on the ear which come from his cursed and devilish passion; must patiently endure the most shameful personal abuse, and must let the other work his entire will upon him as if he were nothing but a dog. In short, he treats him like a slave, after his own hateful will, almost more harshly than the harshest tyrants or most shameless men could do; and what is still more, although these tormentors inflict the most unendurable tortures upon these young people, they must preserve perpetual silence about it, and must not dare to open their lips or complain to anyone, even to the academical authorities; or otherwise they will never be 'absolved' and admitted to become students; which threat terrifies them so much, that they would suffer the most severe and vilest shame and torment ten times over, rather than to inform anyone about it." 'This period of ordeal was brought to an end with a ludicrous and degrading ceremony of "absolution" or "deposition," by which the junior was understood to be purged of all the guilt of his rawness and became a real student, henceforth in turn avenging his past sufferings upon the next generation of freshmen—the history of school-bullying everywhere!

we went to Meissen, which was to me a very long journey, as I had not been used to go so far ; moreover, I had to stop and get food on the way. There were eight or nine of us, three little *fags*, the rest great *Bacchants*, as they were called ; of the fags I was the smallest and the youngest. When I would not go farther, my cousin Paul, with a stick or a switch, lashed me on my bare legs, for I had no hose and worn-out shoes.

"I do not remember all that befell us on the journey ; yet one thing I remember. As we went along, saying all manner of things, the Bacchants told us how it was the custom in Meissen and Silesia that the scholars stole geese and ducks, and other such eatables, and that nothing was done to them, if only they got out of the reach of the man who might happen to own them. One day we saw not far from a village a great flock of geese without their keeper ; for every village has its goose-herd, but here he was at quite a distance from the geese, with the cowherd. Then I asked my comrades, the fags, 'When shall we reach Meissen, that I may steal geese ?' They replied, 'We are there now.' Then I picked up a stone, threw it at one of the geese, and hit him on the leg ; the rest flew off, but the wounded one could not keep up with them. Then I took another stone and hit him on the head, and knocked him down ; for when among my goats I had learned throwing so that no herd of my age could beat me ; also could I blow the horn and leap with the pole : in all such arts was I well exercised among my fellow-herds. Then I ran up, caught the goose by the neck, put him under my coat, and ran down the street through the village. Thereupon the goose-herd began running after me, and cried, 'The boy has stolen my goose.' I and the other fags hurried away, and as I ran, the legs of the goose swung in front of me from under my coat. The peasants, too, came out with javelins and gave chase to throw at us. When I saw that I could not get off with the goose, I sprang out of the village into a thicket, but my companions kept to the street, and the peasants after them. When they fell down on their knees and begged for mercy, saying they had done no harm ; so when the peasants saw they were not the ones who had let the goose drop, they picked the goose up. But as I saw my companions pursued, I was in great distress, and said

to myself, 'Alas! thou hast not prayed to-day,' as I had been taught to do every morning. When the peasants went back they found our Bacchants in the ale-house; for they had gone on before, leaving us to follow them; and they asked them to pay for the goose—it was a matter of two *batzen* or so. I did not hear whether they did or no. When we came up, they laughed and asked what we had been doing; I excused myself by saying that I supposed it the custom of the country. They said it was not yet time for that."

The next adventure of the party appears a more serious one. In a certain wood there encountered them a murderer—no less, as he seemed to the appalled apprehension of the poor fags, and as he might well have been in these lawless times, when every forest was infested by reckless bandits, and the castles of the nobility were little better than robbers' dens. This suspicious character would have held the Bacchants in play till his comrades came up, as Thomas thinks. But among our scholars there was an honest sturdy fellow—a St. Galler, too—named Anthony Schallbether, who had been already to Nuremberg and to Munich, so knew the world, and was up to all tricks upon travellers; this champion of theirs desired the murderer to sheer off, and he had the good feeling to do so for the present. They had not done with him, however, for at the next tavern where they would have taken up their quarters, there was the murderer, as fierce-looking as ever, and others of the same stamp. Luckily there happened to be another inn in the village, to which a change could be made to be rid of such bad company. Even here they did not like the look of things, for when the landlord, after vainly trying to get them to play chess, no doubt with the darkest designs, was showing the big fellows to their room, this resolute Anthony made bold to remark: "Host, methinks you have strange guests, and are not much better yourself. I tell you what: place us in safety, or we will treat you in such a way that you will find your house too narrow for you."

The little boys had no bedroom, nor even supper, since the people of the house were too busy to attend to them; they must needs lie in the stable, where murderers could easily have had their will of them. Let us hope they were too tired to be kept awake by fears. Nobody came to hurt them, but during

the night some evil-disposed person or persons made an attempt to enter the Bacchants' room, with whom it might have fared ill, we are to suppose, if the unfailing Anthony had not taken measures of precaution beforehand. He had made the lock fast with a screw, placed his bed before the door, and kept wax tapers and tinder-box beside him, with which he now quickly struck a light and awoke his comrades; whereupon the rogues sneaked off. What looked very suspicious was that in the morning neither host nor servants could be seen about the place.

When the juniors heard of this, they were heartily-glad that nothing had happened to them in the stable, where, indeed, one might judge it worth nobody's while to rob a Bacchant's bag. Then the whole party, having got clear of the village, fell in with some honest people, who on learning where they had passed the night were surprised to see them safe out of it, since almost all the inhabitants of that place had the worst reputation. This sort of story—a forest, benighted travellers, a faithless host, deeds of darkness—has often been told in Germany; as often, perhaps, he who had it to tell never came away to tell it.

Then it was the turn of the fags to have an adventure of their own. A little way out of Nuremberg the Bacchants put up at a public-house, sending the small boys on in advance, as was their habit when they intended to treat themselves to a good carouse. While the others were walking on alone, there rode up to them a party of horsemen with crossbows ready for action, who surrounded this helpless little band, pointing the bolts at them and demanding money. "We have no money," answered one of the biggest; "we are poor scholars." Still the bandits persisted in their demand, and the boy continued to protest the emptiness of their pockets, till one of the fellows drew his sword and dealt a blow at this boy's head, which cut the cord of his wallet; after which gallant exploit they rode off into a wood, leaving the lads to pursue their way to Nuremberg. These are by no means the only occasions, we are told, on which they found themselves in danger from robbers and murderers, their experience rather casting discredit on that opinion of Juvenal: *cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator*.

They reached Nuremberg at last in safety, and remained there several weeks. But instead of attending the school

which had been the pretence of their pilgrimage, the Bacchants now gave themselves up to enjoyment, while the small boys sang about the streets for alms—those of them who could sing, at least ; as for Thomas, not excelling in this accomplishment, he spent the time in barefaced beggary. The other scholars in the city took offence at these jovial absentees, and threatened to drag them into school. The schoolmaster, too, ordered our Bacchants to attend his teaching, if they did not wish to be brought by force. At this threat valiant Anthony, as spokesman for the rest, bade him come and try. Moreover, he went so far as to carry the war into the enemy's camp, having won over some Swiss among the scholars, who on a given day joined the newcomers. Then, while Thomas and his fellow fags took stones up to the roof of the school, Anthony and the rest made an attack upon the door. Out rushed the dominie with the whole train of his boys, great and small, but they were assailed with such a volley of stones from the roof of their own fortress as to be glad to beat a retreat. Fine doings these for a pack of truants !

Before long, as might have been expected, they heard that the magistrates were going to deal with them, so they hastened to get out of the way, yet not without taking advantage of a neighbour's preparing a marriage-feast to steal three fat geese from his poultry-yard. Being joined by their Swiss accomplices, they quitted this city, in which the liberty of scholars was subject to such interference, and set out to see how they should like the school of St. Ulrica, at Halle, in Saxony.

But on the road, it seems, some of the Bacchants behaved so much worse even than usual to the fags of the party, that they agreed to run away, and for reasons not stated, Paul went with them ; perhaps he saw his way to having a good time of it with the whole train of juniors to forage for him. Anyhow, they came in company to Dresden, but did not think much of the school there, and besides, found their quarters too full of vermin, which at night could actually be heard crawling about the straw on which they lay. So they soon left that place for Breslau, in Silesia, a city of uncommon educational advantages, as will presently appear. On the road they suffered much from hunger, having nothing to eat often but raw onions, roasted acorns, crab apples or pears, which we may take to have been stolen, since the people of this country showed very little

hospitality to the wandering scholars. Many nights they had to lie out under the open sky, refused all shelter by the peasants, some of whom would even set their dogs at them. It was not far indeed from this part of the world that another foot traveller found how

“The rude Carinthian boor
Against the houseless stranger shuts the door.”

Yet judging Platter and his comrades from his own account, we need not think hardly of proprietors of geese, apples, and so on, who preferred the room of these young tramps to their company.

When, however, they at length got to Breslau, they found themselves in clover. This place seems to have been like Cheltenham or Clifton as an educational resort. There were sometimes thousands of scholars in it at a time. Each of the seven parishes of the city had its own school, all with their own truculent *esprit de corps*, for no scholar of one parish, we are told, could go into another without raising an uproar; the boys of that district would run together with shouts of *ad idem ! ad idem !* and thrash the intruders away, unless the latter were in strong enough force to show fight.

Our eight newcomers first attached themselves to the cathedral school, but hearing of some fellow countrymen at that of St. Elizabeth, they soon transferred themselves to the latter parish. Here they found a few Swiss, and many Suabians, who, as neighbours, clanned together with the Swiss, making common cause against all Saxons, Prussians, Poles, and other Gentiles. At the Scotch as well as the German universities this old division into nations is still kept up, though their cantankerous spirit of separation be greatly modified. At the St. Elizabeth school were some hundreds of cells which the masterful Bacchants appropriated as their lodging, while the fags shifted for themselves as best they could. In winter or wet weather they lay by the hearth in the schoolroom. The hot nights of summer let them find more luxuriant quarters, where but in the churchyard, with no lack of grim ghost fears at hand to keep them awake if they were in a mood for such stories ! It was the custom of the place on feast days to strew the chief street with grass or coarse reeds, which these urchins would gather up to make a lair for themselves

and nestle cosily as "pigs in their straw." When a thunder-storm came to disturb this "snug lying," they would run into the school and sing chants all night long to avert the divine wrath.

The charity of the Breslauers must have been most elastic, for all this horde of schoolboys lived upon alms. Schoolboys is hardly the word, since some of the Bacchants were said to have been at the same kind of livelihood for twenty or thirty years. It was of course their fags who did the work of beggary. Thomas still proved himself a most excellent collector. As a small boy and a Switzer, he found the people very generous to him, their bounty really going to his master; the brave patriotism of the Swiss was famed and secretly envied all over Europe. Sometimes when he went into the taverns to beg, the boozing Polish guests would give him so much strong beer that he could not make his way back to the school, though it might be but a stone's throw off. Provisions are stated to have been wonderfully cheap here: the starveling scholars, on reaching this land of plenty, were often apt to overeat themselves till they fell ill.

Then there was a hospital and a physician specially set apart for the guild of students, who, in sickness, has also an ample allowance from the city treasury. Thomas Platter had to go into this hospital three times in the course of the winter, and found it comfortable enough but for the swarms of vermin which infested the beds. Cleanliness could not have been the strong point of school life under such circumstances. "I have often," remembers he, "gone down to the Oder, washed my shirt, hung it on the bushes to dry, and meanwhile picked the vermin off my coat, buried a number of them in a pit and set up a little cross over the place." How like a boy!

So much for the eating, drinking and lodging of this school life, but as for the studying, there does not appear to have been much of it.

"In the school at St. Elizabeth's nine Baccalaureates read every hour in a room. The Greek tongue had not been then introduced into the country, nor had they any printed books; only the teacher had a printed Terence. Whatever was read, had first to be written, then divided, then construed, and then explained, so that when the Bacchants left the school, they had great thick copy-books to carry away with them."

This is all Master Platter has to say to us of his school-hours. One would like indeed to know more about the methods and regulations of this mediæval seminary. Were there bounds? Were there impositions? Were there half holidays? As for flogging, there could not fail to be enough of that in the old days wherever there were youngsters to afford cuticle: education was mainly in the hands of the Church, which in this respect had an unbounded regard for the wisdom of Solomon, and since human nature is much the same in all ages, we may suppose that there were bullies and sneaks and telltales and fine hardy fellows admired by all their comrades. We know how brutal and tyrannous the Bacchantes were, and we can guess how the little fags would laugh and blubber, grumble and cut capers, be sulky and impudent by turns, learn in time the wholesome lesson that what can't be cured must be endured as cheerfully as possible, and contrive, thanks to the blessed elasticity of boyish spirits, to be not wholly miserable for long together under the most discouraging conditions.

The lot of schoolboys is, as has been shown, very different now to what it was then; yet on the whole advancing civilization can have made less difference to boys than to men. At the same time, we know less of the boys than of the men of the past, since telling tales out of school is quite a modern art; and the old learned writers for the most part thought the ways and feelings of youth a subject entirely beneath their grave pens. An exception to this rule is found in the celebrated scholar Erasmus, who was a schoolboy not long before Thomas Platter's time, and has left us some Latin conversations, intended not so much as a play book as a school book, in which he dwells with considerable gusto and humour upon scenes of schoolboy life in his day. From his hints and descriptions we learn that schoolmasters of the period expected to be treated with great outward respect, and that some of them had a terrible reputation among trembling pupils; also, strange to say, that these schoolboys were apt to be very demure before their dominies, and very jovial and free and easy among themselves when the magisterial back was turned. We are told how they too had troubles about spilt ink or lost knives, entertained different opinions as to hard or soft pens, found difficulty in keeping up with the master when he dictated too quick, and would be in a proper fright if they were likely to

be too late for school. In the playground we see them laying their heads together to wheedle the master into giving them a holiday, and picking out some smooth-spoken rogue to act as their orator on the occasion. Then we hear of them playing games not much unlike ours, fives, bowls, or something of the sort, proudly scouting the proposal of plays like riding on a stick as fit only for children, while some preferred to amuse themselves in fishing, or catching poor frogs and butterflies.

We may as well have an example of these familiar colloquies, only wishing it had been written by a schoolboy rather than a schoolmaster. The "chaff" and allusions of the following conversation will strike us as, perhaps, more ponderous than that of real life ; still, no doubt, we have the boy of the period in outline.

Masters Vincentius and Laurentius are consulting what they shall play at.

Vincent : " Shall we have a jumping-match ? "

Lawrence : " That game doesn't agree just after dinner. "

Vincent : " Why not ? "

Lawrence : " Because the ballast in the body weighs down the belly. "

Vincent : " That's not so with those who have dined in school. For there one is generally ready for supper before one has finished dinner. "

Lawrence : " What kind of jumping then would you like ? "

Vincent : " Let us begin with the easiest—the grasshopper's jump, or rather the frog's, with both legs and the feet together. When we have had enough of that we can try another kind. "

Lawrence : " Well, I don't object to any kind, unless there be danger in it for the legs ; I had rather have nothing to do with surgeons. "

Vincent : " What if we try hopping ? "

Lawrence : " That is a goblin's game : none of it for me ! "

Vincent : " Leaping with a pole is one of the best kinds. "

Lawrence : " It would be better to try a race. That is the kind of contest which Æneas proposed in Virgil. "

Vincent : " So he did ; but he also proposed a boxing-match, which does not please me. "

Lawrence : " Mark out the course. Let the starting-point be here, and that oak the goal. "

Vincent : " But would that Æneas were here to propose also prizes for the winner !"

Lawrence : " The glory of winning is quite prize enough."

Vincent : " A prize ought rather to be given to the loser by way of consolation."

Lawrence : " Well, let it be the prize of the loser to march back into the town with a wreath of berries on his head."

Vincent : " I shall have no objection, if you will march before playing on a fife."

Lawrence : " It's terribly hot."

Vincent : " No wonder, at midsummer."

Lawrence : " It would be better to have a swim."

Vincent : " A frog's life doesn't suit me. I am a terrestrial, not an amphibious animal."

Lawrence : " But yet this kind of exercise used to be considered one of the best."

Vincent : " It is very useful, too."

Lawrence : " Why ?"

Vincent : " If you have to run away in battle, you stand a better chance for having exercised yourself both in running and swimming."

Lawrence : " That is an art by no means to be despised. For there is sometimes as much credit in running away well as in fighting bravely."

Vincent : " I am altogether unskilled and unpractised in swimming ; and it is not safe to have to do with a strange element."

Lawrence : " But you must get accustomed to it ; nobody is born a master of any art."

Vincent : " I have heard, though, of many masters of this art swimming in and not swimming out again."

Lawrence : " You might try first with a cork."

Vincent : " I trust a cork no more than my own legs ; if you have a mind to swim, I would rather look on than join you."

This prudent youth was not singular in his distrust of the water, which ought to have been more freely used by persons of every age in these times. On hot days there must always have been found idle boys bold enough to risk the danger of cleaning or drowning themselves ; but anxious parents would seem to have looked with suspicion on such a pastime as open-air bathing. Bartholomew Sastron, at least, another German

autobiographer of the sixteenth century, tells us how once he was so naughty as to bathe on the sea shore with other abandoned urchins, and how his uncle spied them from a garden and told his father, who accordingly next morning came, rod in hand, into the boy's bedroom. "He worked himself up into a rage, and spoke loud in order to awake me. When I awoke and saw him standing before me, and the rod lying on the next bed, I knew well what was in the wind, and began to pray and entreat, weeping bitterly. He asked what I had done. I swore I would never again, all my life long, bathe in the sea. 'Yes, sir,' he said (when he called me *sir*, I knew well that matters stood badly between us); 'if you have bathed, then I must use the mop.' Thereupon he seized the rod, threw my clothes over my head, and gave me my deserts. My parents," adds the grateful chronicler, "brought up their children well."

To return to Thomas Platter and his schoolfellows: though Breslau was such a scholastic paradise, we find Paul and him, after a time, leaving it to see how they should like Dresden for a change. There were again eight Swiss of the party, and as before they suffered much from hunger on the way. Sometimes, however, they did not do so badly, as appears from an account of one day's foraging, when they separated to gather a supper by their united exertions, some looking after geese, some hunting for turnips and onions, some being charged to provide a pot, while the little fellows had the task of procuring bread and salt somehow in the neighbouring town of Neumark. In the evening they met by a certain well, a gunshot out of the city, where, having got two geese along with other provender, they were laying themselves out for enjoyment. But as soon as they lit their fire, a shot was sent at them from the city walls, so, taking this hint, they moved off behind a ridge to a thicket by a little stream. There they set about preparing their gipsy feast without further interruption. The bigger companions cut down boughs and made a hut; some plucked the geese, others shred the vegetables into the pot which, by fair means or foul, was forthcoming; others made wooden spits and began to roast; then, as soon as the meat was a little brown, they lost no time in devouring it, and the pot too was soon emptied. There is something Homeric in this description of the wandering scholars' supper.

And after, as would appear, they had eaten quite enough, they found themselves still further in luck. When they had lain down to rest, a flapping noise was heard, which turned out to come from a pond close by, the water of which had been let out during the day, and the fish were naturally in a state of agitation. It seemed quite a matter of course for our adventurers to help themselves to as many fish as they could carry in a shirt, made into a bag for the nonce and slung upon a stick, with which they set off at once to the nearest village, and gave some of their prey to a peasant on condition that he should cook the rest in beer for them. The young rascals show not the least sense that they are arrant thieves, living by such petty larceny as in these days brought many a tall man to the gallows.

At Dresden we hear of worse doings still. The very schoolmaster, who ought to have known better, joined their Bacchantes in sending out these "fags" to pick up a goose or two. Thomas took the lead in this escapade, bringing down the geese with a dexterously-thrown stick; but he was much disgusted by the cowardice of his comrades, who did not back him up, for fear of the goose-herds. They managed, however, to bag two geese, with which the schoolmaster and the Bacchantes made merry on taking leave of each other; for, as usual, they did not stay long here, but moved on to Nuremberg.

Not far out of Dresden the party had an unusually hospitable reception at the house of a villager to which Thomas came begging. This peasant asked where he came from, and on hearing that he was Swiss, made him most welcome, and bid him fetch his companions. Having set a good meal before them, the peasant said to his mother, who was lying in bed in the room: "Mother, I have often heard you say that you would like to see a Switzer before you die. Here are several. For your sake I have invited them." The old woman raised herself up to look at such welcome guests, thanked her son for bringing them, and said: "I have heard so much good of the Swiss that I very much wished to see one. Now I can die more willingly, so make yourselves merry." It was clearly worth while to be a Swiss in these days.

The scholars seem only to have passed through Nuremberg, which their previous behaviour may be supposed to have made too hot to hold them. They went on to Munich, at the gates of

which they had some difficulty in obtaining admittance : perhaps there were too many of their sort in the city already. But an old acquaintance of Paul's being brought to answer for them, they were allowed to enter, and took up their quarters with a soap-boiler ; at least, Paul and Thomas did. The latter, as usual, must needs betake himself to the old trade of begging about the streets, and also helped their landlord in his soap-boiling business. He accompanied this man into the surrounding villages to buy ashes ; then, when at home, the mistress of the house gave him the task of feeding an old blind dog, a great pet of hers. So, though they stayed here some time, we can believe our hero in telling us that he seldom went to school. His Bacchant, however, did condescend to avail himself of the educational facilities of Munich, till an interruption occurred which has distracted more young men than him from their studies. Master Paul, it seems, had a mind "to make too much acquaintance with the maid," a thing the master would not allow. So they once more fared forth into the world.

This time, for a holiday, they went straight home to their native valley, after an absence of five years. When young Platter thus came back, a travelled youth, his folks saw and heard him with bewildered admiration, declaring "Our Tomlin speaks so deep that no one can understand him."* But this obscurity of speech did not proceed from his learning. The fact was, that wandering so young through so many regions, he had picked up something of the dialects of every people among whom he had been. This, with some other questionable accomplishments, formed, as yet, pretty nearly all the fruits of his school-life. The Bacchants had not cared even to have him taught to read properly.

It should have been already mentioned that at Breslau a certain gentleman called Fugger—a name of the same significance as that of Rothschild in our day—had offered to adopt the little beggar on learning that he was a Swiss. Thomas

* The same remark might be made by the present writer. Platter's book is written in barbarous old German, interlarded with Swiss and other provincialisms. This must excuse one or two errors into which I may have fallen. I notice that former translators have shirked certain passages altogether. Since these pages are in print, I find that a translation of this autobiography into modern German has recently been published, too late to save me a great deal of trouble.

appears to have been not unwilling; and, indeed, this could hardly have failed to prove a rise in life for him. But he felt bound to consult Paul, as his guardian in a strange land, who was by no means so well pleased with the notion of losing his useful fag. "I have brought you out of your native place," he said, "and I will bring you back to your friends; then you can do as they bid you." So the boy had remained a poor scholar's apprentice, when he might have become a ready-made gentleman, or perhaps one of the merchant-princes of his age.

His friends, indeed, for all that appears to the contrary, cared little enough what became of him. His mother had married a third time in his absence, and did not seem particularly glad to see him back. The first words she said to him were: "Has the devil brought you here again?" "The devil has not brought me, but my feet," answered Thomas. "However, I will not long be a burden to you." Then she said, softening a little: "You are not a burden to me; but it grieves me that you go roving backwards and forwards in this way, and I daresay learn nothing. It would be better if you learned to work, like your late father. You will never be a priest; I am not so fortunate as to be the mother of a priest!"

After having been elsewhere welcomed so kindly as a Swiss, this was a cold greeting for the lad to get on returning home; and we need not be surprised to hear that he stayed only two or three days with his mother. Not for him might the long weary ways of learning be cheered by any such song as that of our schoolboys'

"Domum, domum, dulce domum,
Dulce domum resonemus."

III.

AFTER a short holiday in this school life, which was almost all "breakings up" and hardly any lessons, Thomas once more set out on the tramp with his Bacchant. This time Paul took away another fag out of the neighbourhood, a child named Hildebrand Kalbermatter, son of a priest, who had a mind for learning or wandering, or perhaps allowed himself to be wheedled into the enterprise by that great greedy vagabond. Paul lost little time in making profit out of the new recruit. Hildebrand's friends had given him a piece of homespun cloth to make a coat with. When the party reached Ulm, Thomas

was sent about with the cloth begging money to pay for making it up, he being a skilled journeyman in this craft, to which Hildebrand was only a raw apprentice. In his hands, the cloth proved such a good bait for donations, that, as we shall see, there was no hurry about turning it into a coat.

Paul had now joined company with another Bacchant, named Achatius, a native of Mayence, and the two fags found quite enough to do in providing for them both, without going often to school. Thomas by this time knew better than to keep anything back from his tyrants, even though he went hungry himself; but poor little Hildebrand could not refrain from eating all that was given him. The Bacchants were duly indignant at such dishonesty, and took care not to spare the rod and spoil the child who was getting into such bad ways. "They sometimes went after him in the streets to catch him in the act; or when he came back, they would force him to rinse out his mouth with water and spit into a basin, to see if he had been eating; and if he had, they would take him, throw him over a bed, smother his head in a bolster to drown his cries, and then give him a terrible thrashing. This frightened me so much that I brought everything to them. We had often so much bread that it would turn mouldy; then they would cut off the mouldy outside and let us have that. Many a time have I suffered sorely from hunger and cold, going about in the dark till midnight to sing for bread. There was a pious widow at Ulm, who had a son, Paul Reling, and two daughters. Often in winter this widow wrapped my feet in a warm rug which she had laid by the stove to warm me when I came. She would also give me a basin of food and then let me go. Sometimes indeed I was so hungry, that I drove away the dogs in the street from their bones, and gnawed them; and I even hunted out crumbs from the cracks in the school-room."

From Ulm, they went to Munich, where Thomas was kept at work for a year begging money to make the other boy's coat, while Hildebrand had no doubt abundant opportunities of learning the duty of a Bacchant's fag to control his appetite. Then they came back to Ulm, and showed round the cloth again, supposing that people there might have forgotten it. But one charity-organizer of the period took our hero to task with: "Has that coat never been made yet? This is a bit of knavery of yours." The German word he used means literally

"boy's work," as does our *knavery*, boys getting the credit of all kinds of ill-doing, from the Knave of Hearts downwards ; but here, as we know, it was the grown-up scamps who should have borne the blame. What became of the cloth in the end, and whether the coat ever got made, Thomas cannot tell. It lasted all his time, Hildebrand having to shiver along coatless that his masters' stomachs might be filled. One would like to have had the warming of their backs for them.

Next came another short visit to their native place, from which the companions returned to Munich. Here the Bacchants got lodgings for themselves, but none for their fags, three of whom proposed to go at night to the corn-market and sleep upon sacks. Some women in the streets asked where they were going. Among these was a butcheress, who, on learning that the boys were Swiss, took pity on them. "Run !" she said to her maid, "put the pot with the soup and the rest of the meat on the fire. They must lodge with me to-night ; I have a good will to all Swiss. I served in an inn at Innspruck when the Emperor Maximilian held his court there. There were many Swiss coming about him, and they were such good people, that I will be friendly to them all my life." This was a good hearing for the hungry fags. The kind woman took them in for the night, and gave them their fill of supper. In the morning she offered to take one of them to live with her for good. They were all willing enough, but she chose Thomas, "because I looked a little sharper than the others." Then for a time he was well off, enjoying the comforts of a home, and in return doing small chores about the house, fetching beer and meat, lending a hand in the field, and so forth.

At the same time, however, he had still to provide for Paul, which the good woman did not approve of. "Let the Bacchant alone and stay with me ; then you need not beg," she told him. Thomas tried this advice, for more than a week keeping away from both the school and the Bacchant. Then it was Paul's turn to object. He came and knocked at the door, and we can suppose how the heart of our truant thumped within him. "Say you are sick," suggested the woman ; and he did so, for the slavish training he had gone through was not likely to have made him very particular about truthfulness. When Paul came in to see for himself the state of things, the hospitable housewife fell upon him with motherly indignation. "You are a fine

fellow for not having looked after Thomas!" she exclaimed. "He has been sick and is so still." The Bacchant had the grace to feel a little ashamed, or to pretend some kindness, for he professed to be sorry, and went away telling the boy to come to him when he was able to go out.

After this, Thomas kept out of his way till one Sunday they met at church. When the service was over, Paul accosted his deserter with: "You fag, you don't come to me; I will trample you under foot some day." Thomas was a big boy now, and didn't see the good of being trampled on, or otherwise ill-used, if it could be helped. A taste of liberty and comfort having opened his eyes, he began to ask himself why he should not shake off the oppression of this Bacchant, who for so many years had been a burden on his back like the Old Man of the Sea in the story of Sindbad. He knew well how little good he had got from the connection; after such an experience of acting as jackal, he felt himself quite capable of managing for himself, since he certainly would fare no worse when the lion's share had not to come out of his means of subsistence. In fact, he made up his mind to run away. It seems strange to us that he had not done so long before.

Yet so strong was the force of habit upon him, that he would not even take his benefactress into confidence, for fear Paul should get an inkling of his intentions. The Bacchant had given out terrible threats against any fag of his who should try to slip off the yoke. The day after their encounter at church, Thomas told the butcheress that he was going to school to *wash his shirt*. Leaving the house very early with this excuse, he did not go near the school, but crossed the Iser at dawn, meaning to make for Salzburg or Vienna. He durst not take the road for Switzerland, lest Paul should pursue him, guessing he would turn homewards.

This poor fag had been so long dependent, that, though now sixteen or seventeen years old, he soon felt quite appalled at the audacity of the step he was taking, as if he had been leaving a snug home and tender parents. On the other side of "Iser rolling rapidly," he had to mount a hill, on which he sat down, taking a farewell look at Munich by sunrise, and crying bitterly as he reflected that he was now alone in the world. While he sat lamenting thus, half inclined perhaps to turn again like Whittington and so many other youths who have

run away to think better of it at the first stage of their journey, a peasant passed driving an empty waggon in which he had taken a load of salt into the city. The man was half drunk, but he good-naturedly gave Thomas a lift. When he stopped to bait his horses, the lad did a turn of his accustomed trade, begging through the village, then, going ahead a little way, waited by the road for his new friend, and soon fell asleep. On awaking he began to cry—a soft-hearted fellow this Tomlin, for one who had had such hard times of it! “I thought the peasant had driven on, and felt as if I had lost my father.” The waggon, however, came rumbling along after all, the driver by this time quite drunk. He took Thomas up again, nevertheless, and in the evening set him down on the bye-road to Salzburg, having carried him some thirty miles of the way.

After spending the night not very comfortably, for there was a thick hoarfrost, and he had no hat nor shoes, only torn hose and a thin jacket, he went on to Passau, hoping to get a passage on the Danube to Vienna. But at the gates of Passau he was refused admission—some of these mediæval cities had such care to keep themselves clear of vagabonds—so he asked the gatekeeper for the nearest road to Switzerland. On hearing that he should return by Munich, he made up his mind rather to go many leagues out of his way to avoid that city, and turned his steps towards Freissing. Here he found a school and some Swiss at it, so he thought now of setting up as a scholar on his own account, with that scanty capital of the thin jacket and the hose all in holes. It was high time: as yet he had learned next to nothing but a little practical geography, after so many perambulations of the country from Ulm to Munich and from Munich to Nuremberg.

He was not, however, to be left here in peace. Before long his cousin Paul came after the runaway, not with a cane, or a birch-rod, but, we are told, with no less formidable an instrument of correction than a halberd. Some of the fags warned Thomas that his Bacchant was looking for him; whereupon, having nothing to pack up, he ran straight out of the gate, “as if he had been at my heels,” and made for Ulm, where he found quarters at the house of the saddler’s widow who had formerly wrapped his feet in a warm rug and fed him when almost starving. He stayed several weeks with this kind woman, helping her in the field, and keeping away from the

school, till he heard that Paul had come on to Ulm in pursuit of him. The Bacchant, indeed, must have felt the loss of this fag, who had been such a good provider for him so long, and was evidently determined to have Thomas back by fair means or foul.

Thomas, on the other hand, was equally determined to keep clear of him and his alarming halberd ; so on this news he set out at once, late in the day as it was, and took the road to Constance, lamenting to have to leave the dear woman who had been like a mother to him. But when he had crossed the lake of Constance, he was more than comforted at the sight of some little Swiss peasants in white jackets, like himself in his old goat-herd days. "Ah, my God! how glad I was! I thought myself in the kingdom of heaven."

He now went to Zurich, where he found several old Bacchants, natives of his own canton, to whom, in spite of previous experience, he offered his services, if they would teach him something in return ; which, however, they did as little as the others. The wandering habits of these scholars no doubt served to carry news sooner or later from one school to another, so that it was difficult for him to hide long from his old master. After some months, Paul's other fag, Hildebrand, was sent by that potentate all the way from Munich to Zurich, on an embassy to our hero, offering him pardon for the past, if he would return to his duty. But the fish once caught shuns henceforth the deceitful hook, however well baited, as our Latin "*Delectus*" says. Thomas wisely stayed where he was, till one Anthony Benet or Venet, a fellow-countryman, proposed to him a visit to Strasbourg.

To Strasbourg they went accordingly, but found a bad school and too many scholars to make a good living of it. They went on, then, to Schlettstadt, but by the way heard such a discouraging account of it—"many poor scholars, and no rich inhabitants"—that Anthony sat down and began to cry, and Thomas had to cheer him up by promising to support both of them, "if there is one in Schlettstadt who makes shift to live by himself," so great confidence had he in his practised talents as a mendicant! Thomas had his own troubles, too, on the road, caused by eating too many unripe nuts, it seems, like any schoolboy of any century. One night which they were passing in a mill, he was taken so bad that he thought it must be all

up with him. Then Anthony fell a-crying again, at the prospect of losing his companion, and being left alone in a world where tears are of little help along its rough roads. "And yet," declared Thomas of this blubberer, "he had ten crowns hidden about him, and I not a farthing!"

At Schlettstadt, they found lodging in the house of a blind man, and lost no time in presenting themselves before the teacher, Master John Sapidus, for leave to enter his school. The first question was where they came from; then, on hearing the new boys belonged to Vispach, this orthodox dominie shook his head, with the remark, "They are a wicked people there; they have driven all their bishops out of the country." The throes of the Reformation were now beginning to be felt in Switzerland. But in spite of this objection Sapidus was willing to admit them, and on terms which bespeak his zeal for learning. "If you study diligently, you need pay me nothing; if not, you must pay me, or I will have the coats off your backs." A bad bargain for most schoolmasters, who have more often found another way of taking it out of the backs of their idle pupils.

"This," says Thomas Platter, with admiring gratitude, "was the first school which appeared to me to go on well." Master Sapidus, if not favourable to the Reformation, had come under the influence of the great revival of letters which fostered this movement, and was unconsciously labouring not a little in the very cause he denounced. He had as many as nine hundred pupils at a time, among them, we are given to know, no less distinguished ones than the eminent Dr. Gemusæus and the famous Dr. Huberus, with other renowned scholars, now as clean lost in the crowded roll of fame as *fortis Gyas*, *fortisque Cloanthus*. One of his first cares, according to the fashion of the period, was to latinize the barbarous names of the newcomers, who henceforth figured on his roll as *Thomas Platterus* and *Antonius Venetius*. On the occasion of rechristening, he ordered these two to stand up that he might bait them with a pedagogue's wit. "What a pair of clumsy fags these are; and what fine-sounding names they have!" said he; at which all the rest no doubt laughed, as in duty bound. The reproach, confesses Platter, was not undeserved, especially in the case of his companion, who remained a regular lout; for himself, he claims that his travels had made him more ready to fall in with

the ways of whatever people he might find himself among. We know how to schoolboys, savages, and other communities of narrow experience, it seems one of the worst of crimes to be ignorant of their customs.

Yet Platterus, for all his new name, and his old frequenting of schools, was a sadly raw scholar. At the age of eighteen, he now knew nothing, could not even read his grammar, and sat among the younger fellows of the lowest form, "like a hen among chickens." He had all the will to learn, however, which is the root of the matter, if anyone would but show him the way. Sapidus had, it seems, an assistant, a very learned Bachelor of Arts, who "plagued the Bacchantes so much with Donatus," that Thomas thought he could not do better than learn this book off by heart. It was *the* Latin Grammar of the Middle Ages, the one, indeed, upon which our modern grammars are founded, all written in Latin, and the backward scholar, who could not construe a single sentence, must have found it most tough and indigestible. Like Chaucer's schoolboy, "he wist not what this Latin was to say," but he declares that he accomplished his self-imposed task of committing every word of the book to memory, and yet, at the end, he could not for his life have gone over a noun of the first declension.

The copy he used was probably a well-thumbed and ill-printed volume, containing many of the examples familiar to us, *musa, magister, amo, audio*, with all their cases and moods running on in unbroken lines, not separated into tables to help the eye, so that the pronouns, for instance, fill three or four pages of close print without even a capital letter to break the appalling array of outlandish words, and not a word of explanation in the mother tongue from cover to cover. To us spoilt children of time the very look of such a book is enough to give a headache. It is pleasing to know that Donatus was one of the first works to be illustrated with wood blocks. Such a thick dumpling of knowledge must have wanted some sauce to make it go down with youthful minds, not always too keen for wholesome nourishment. Yet in these days, when it proved so hard to become a scholar, one favourable effect was that few became scholars who were not fit to be good ones. The sieve of Donatus was a slow but thorough process.

So great grew the reputation of this school that it drew more scholars than could be supported by the charity of the neigh-

bourhood, on which account Thomas and his comrade found themselves obliged to try their luck at Soleure. Here the alms were more abundant, and the school not bad on the whole, but the pupils had to go too much to church and thereby lose time, as our hero judged, who therefore betook himself home for a change. He learned a little from a local teacher, but soon caught the ague and had to be nursed by his Aunt Frances, while he kept his knowledge from going rusty by teaching the alphabet to a small cousin of his, who in good time became a respectable scholar.

The love of learning seems to have spread in the family, for all Thomas's reports of its thorny ways, since when next spring he took the field for another scholastic campaign, he was accompanied by two younger brothers. Their mother could have had still no good opinion of such a course of life, for she wept at parting with them, and said: "God have mercy upon me that now I must see three sons go into misery!" This was the only time that the youth ever saw his mother in tears. She had shown herself a hard mother to him as to the other children by her first marriage, so much so that they seldom entered her house. In other respects he testifies that she was an honest and pious woman, who made a brave fight against the troubles of her life. When left a widow, for the third time, she worked like any man to keep her younger children, thrashing, hewing wood, making hay, and doing other rough tasks which commonly belong to the stronger sex. It is even recorded of her that in a time of pestilence she buried three of her family with her own hands, to save the heavy charges of a gravedigger.

In this expedition Thomas proved to have forgotten his early habitudes, for descending the snow-covered mountains he tried to slide down, sitting like his brothers, somewhat in the fashion known to Scotch boys as *cuddy-hunkers*, but not managing his feet properly was thrown over, and came tumbling head and heels at the risk of cracking his crown against a tree. Three times the same mishap occurred; and we can imagine how the youngsters would laugh at their big brother, who, with all his learning, didn't know how to go down a mountain properly as any goat-herd could do. Perhaps he found them too irreverent, for he left them at a town on the way, himself going on to Zurich, earnestly bent on study. The master here was not all

he should have been ; but before long it was announced that a new teacher would take his place from whom great things might be expected. Then our hero chose a seat in a corner near the teacher's chair, vowing to himself, "Here will I become a scholar or die!"

The new teacher was Oswald Myconius, known in the records of the Swiss Reformation. He at once began his work in earnest. The boys were set to read Terence, and had to decline and conjugate every word in a whole comedy. There might be no trifling with this lover of thoroughness, though he did without the usual severities of school life. "Many a time he so dealt with me that through fear my shirt has been wet with perspiration, and my eyes dim, and yet he never gave me a blow, except once a gentle cuff on the cheek." So relates Thomas, who had at last found a master to his mind. "Whenever he had been rough with me he would take me home and give me a meal, and afterwards liked to hear me tell how I had wandered about Germany, and all that I had gone through ;" so he clearly became a favourite, and was made *custos*, or school-keeper—a responsible office to which was attached some small fee from each of his fellow pupils.

He was learning from Myconius more than grammar—more perhaps than either of them guessed. Under the as yet unchanged forms of Popery hot doubts were now seething, and Zurich was to be one of the first places where the lava flood of new doctrine would burst forth through the old crust. This schoolmaster began to read lectures on the Bible, which were attended by many of the townspeople, and not thrown away upon the young minds under his influence. Myconius himself, though a Gospeller at heart, had still to keep up appearances by attending mass with his scholars ; but to some of them he did not scruple to show how light he made of these parrot-like services. Thomas, who helped in the singing part of such functions, became infected with his master's laxness, even to the point of irreverence, as appears from the following story. As *custos* it was his business to keep up fires in the schoolroom, and fuel would be sometimes hard to come by :

"One morning, as they were ringing the bell for service, and there was no wood for heating the school, I said to myself in my simplicity : 'You have no wood, and there are so many images in the church !' No one being there I went into the

church, seized a wooden St. John from the first altar, hurried back to the school, and into the stove with him, saying: 'Jogli, now bend yourself; you must go into the stove even though you are a St. John.' As soon as he began to burn the oil paint hissed and went into blisters. 'Keep still, now,' quoth I; 'if you move, which you can't do, I will shut the door of the stove, and you daren't come out unless the devil fetches you.' Then the wife of Myconius came in on her way to church, and said: 'God give you a good day, my son. Have you lighted the stove?' Shutting the stove door I answered: 'Yes, mother, it is quite ready.' I durst not, however, tell her what I had done, for if it had been known it would at that time have cost me my life. In school Myconius said: 'Custos, you have got good wood to-day.' Thought I to myself, 'The credit belongs to St. John.' When we had to sing Mass two priests were quarrelling, and one said to the other, 'You Lutheran knave, you have stolen my St. John!' This they kept up for a time, and Myconius did not know what the matter was; but the St. John never was found. Of course I told no one till several years later, when Myconius was preacher at Basle; then I told him the truth, and he was much surprised, and remembered about the priests quarrelling."

Clearly such a sacrilegious custos was in no good way to make a priest, though he still looked to see himself in this office, while already despising the rite of the Church as mere *bubenwerk*—boy's play with a suspicion of knavery. His doubts increased more and more as he heard the sermons of the great Reformer, Ulrich Zwingle, who was now moving all Zurich by his denunciation of outward show and vain forms taking the place of true religion. And yet the youth, at this critical period of his life, might have passed in most eyes as a zealous devotee of Popery. Least of all, as usual in such cases, did he know himself how fast and far he was drifting from the old faith. He still prayed much in the accustomed fashion of piety to the Virgin Mary, to St. Catherine that he might become learned, to St. Barbara that he might not die without the sacrament, to St. Peter that the gates of heaven might be opened to him. He was diligent in confession, fasting, and penance; he went on religious processions; he even fought with his companions for Popery. It was a great trouble to him when a certain priest once refused him absolution because



ZURICH.

he had eaten cheese during a fast, as permitted by the laxer usage of his native district. Then one day his eyes were opened by a sermon from Zwingli on the text, *I am the Good Shepherd*, which he explained so forcibly that "I felt as if some one had pulled me up into the air by the hair of my head and shown me how God would require the blood of the lost sheep at the hands of careless pastors," so that Thomas said to himself, "If this be so, I will never be a priest."

Mass and images, the outward signs of Romanism, were still kept up at Zurich, which began, however, to bear among its neighbours the name of having fallen away from the faith. When Thomas went on another visit home, he found himself hailed as a heretic, and provoked by bigoted priests to an argument which must have helped to convince himself, at least, of the truth of the new opinions. He was advised not to return to Zurich, since the people of the orthodox cantons were proposing to bring that irreligious city back to sound doctrine by force of arms. For the meanwhile, however, the deputies who met to consult upon such a step sensibly resolved that, "as the Zurichers wished to learn from the holy Scriptures, these questions should be left to be fought out by men of learning." So the religious war was deferred, and Thomas Platter went back for a fresh bout of study and starving. Many days he had nothing to eat, and would beg a little salt from the old woman with whom he lodged, that he might flavour a pitcher of water, his only nourishment. Now we hear no more of cadging about for alms; he worked for his livelihood, going messages at so much a mile, carrying wood and doing other jobs of which many a student would be ashamed; then he had his trifling fees as custos, which depended on the number of boys at the school. Zwingli and Myconius often employed him in taking private letters to their sympathizers in other parts of the country, a service of no small danger, which he undertook with zeal for the sake of "the truth," making more than one narrow escape from its enemies. By this time he must have been fully committed to the principles of the Reformation.

His schoolboy career was over, and priesthood being out of the question, he had to consider how he should support himself. First he became tutor to a citizen's son, "getting his meals every day," as a new experience to be thankful for. But he still kept on his own studies with such earnestness as to

endanger his health. Now he made up well for lost time, not being content with the ordinary standard. Myconius himself was little more than a Latin scholar, but Platter took up Greek and Hebrew. The shifts he had to be at to learn even the elements of these languages may well astound our luxurious *literati*. His old master had an assistant named Bibliander who was author of a Hebrew grammar. Thomas used to get up early and copy out this book before Bibliander was awake, and the learned author never found out the liberty thus taken. His mother dying, he came into a small inheritance, of which the last crown went for a Hebrew Bible, that by rare chance was offered cheap to any poor scholar. In Hebrew, under such difficulties, he made so good progress as soon to find employment in instructing some of the country clergy, among whom the Reformation had begotten a new demand for learning.

Our hero's next essay seems a strange one: following the example of another student, he learned rope-making, and took a place at Basle with a master who had such a bad name for ill-temper that he could hardly get journeymen to stay with him. Thomas had much to put up with here, but his love of learning sustained him. Every spare moment, at night, on holidays, he spent over such books as he could procure, his master alternately scolding and laughing at him. He used to fix unbound sheets of Plautus in a little wooden fork, sticking this in the hemp on which he was working, that he might read while he twisted it; then if his master came by, he would throw the hemp over the telltale paper as another scholar might do to hide some idle trick. In this place he made acquaintance with several scholars: the famous Erasmus himself came to him one day when he was working at a great rope. As a rope-maker's journeyman he began to teach Hebrew, his well-dressed pupils rather staring at the shabby appearance of their professor. Withal, he assures us that he mastered the rope-making craft, being able to act as foreman after six months' practice. We can understand that whatever such a man's hand found to do, he would do it with all his might.

The religious civil wars between Zurich and the Five Cantons came to interrupt this way of life. Thomas, destined to try many trades, took the field as armour-bearer to his master, but confesses he had no taste for fighting, though he seems to have been ready enough to do his duty with the rest upon occasion.

He next became a country schoolmaster for a bit, dealing in wine, too, and in apples, which his wife sold to the boys. For at this period he married, and thus turned his back upon all prospect of becoming a priest. Master Zwingle had given the word that there were too many priests in the land, that boys should rather be trained to live by work.

After such vicissitudes, our hero's fortunes are now not far from smooth water. He returned to Basle with Myconius, appointed Protestant preacher there. Thomas became by turns doctor's assistant, corrector of the press, master-printer and professor. At last he settled down as head of the school of Basle, a post for which he must have been well qualified, as far as a large and varied experience of school life went. He spent the rest of his days peacefully, accumulated some property, even got to have debts, which in a certain way bespeak some measure of prosperity, gained the respect of his fellow citizens, and died in 1582 at a good old age.

In his seventy-third year he wrote, for the benefit of his son Felix, an autobiography, whence this young gentleman, as we may do, might learn to contrast his own advantages with the hard youthful struggle through which his father had at length worked a way up to learning, honour, and usefulness. What better can a man desire? Had this man ever hoped as much, when shivering and starving in the service of those bully Bacchants, he as yet knew too little of the world or of letters to assure himself, *Hæc olim meminisse juvabit!* Were he alive now, he would find things greatly changed for the better in his native land, which has taken a lead among European nations in providing for popular instruction. In some cantons of Switzerland, grown men are forced to attend school, if their acquirements be not up to the legal standard; and that very Frauenmunster school at Zurich, where Thomas Platter applied himself so laboriously to learn Latin, now contains a museum for the exhibition of the best scholastic systems and apparatus, such as gave him little enough help along his painful path to scholarship.



A BLUE-COAT BOY.

I.

“**I** WAS born, and passed the first seven years of my life, in the Temple. Its church, its halls, its gardens, its fountain, its river, I had almost said—for in those young years, what was this king of rivers to me but a stream that watered our pleasant places?—these are of my oldest recollections. I repeat, to this day, no verses to myself more frequently, or with kindlier emotion, than those of Spenser, where he speaks of this spot :

“ ‘There when they came, whereas those brick towers,
The which on Themines brode aged back doth ride,
Where now the studious lawyers have their bowers,
There whylome wont the Templer knights to bide
Till they decayed through pride.’

Indeed, it is the most elegant spot in the metropolis. What a transition for a countryman visiting London for the first time—the passing from the crowded Strand or Fleet Street, by unexpected avenues, into its magnificent ample squares, its classic green recesses ! What a cheerful, liberal look hath that portion of it which, from three sides, overlooks the greater garden ; that goodly pile

“ ‘Of building strong, albeit of Paper height,’

confronting with massy contrast the lighter, older, more fantastically shrouded one, named of Harcourt, with the cheerful Crown-Office Row (place of my kindly engendure), right oppo-

site the stately stream, which washes the garden-foot with her yet scarcely trade-polluted waters, and seems but just weaned from her Twickenham Naiades ! a man would give something to have been born in such places. What a collegiate aspect has that fine Elizabethan hall, where the fountain plays which I have made to rise and fall, how many times ! to the astoundment of the young urchins, my contemporaries, who, not being able to guess at its recondite machinery, were almost tempted to hail the wondrous work as magic ! What an antique air had the now almost effaced sun-dials, with their moral inscriptions, seeming coëval with that Time which they measured, and to take their revelations of its flight immediately from heaven, holding correspondence with the fountain of light !”

Thus writes Charles Lamb in one of the many autobiographical fragments scattered through the *Essays of Elia*. The story of his boyhood is here to be told as far as possible in his own words, so that the reader who comes to these pages seeking oysters shall find pearls. The task of the present writer is but to string together reminiscences, half-imaginative as they may sometimes be, which are almost the only materials we have for the early life of this best known and most loved of all Blue-Coat boys.

Though Lamb's childhood was spent in such a stately scene, he belonged to a humble enough family, if any one could think of such considerations in connection with him. “To have the feelings of gentility,” as he truly says, “it is not necessary to have been born gentle,” and he well carried out the promise of that characteristically sportive allusion to his own patronymic, which he of all men could not but pun upon,

“No deed of mine shall shame thee, gentle name !”

His father had been a poor boy from Lincoln, who rose to be clerk to one of the benchers of the Temple—confidential friend and faithful servant in one. He had a comfortable place, and that was all. “Snug firesides, the low-built roof, parlours ten feet by ten, frugal boards, and all the homeliness of home—these were the condition of my birth, the wholesome soil which I was planted in.”

In this way our Charles came to be born in the heart of London, which, all his life, he loved as the Lakesman loves his mountains, and the Yorkshireman his moors. Yet in childhood

he had some experiences of country life along with occasional peeps at "the contrasting accidents of a great fortune." His grandmother was housekeeper at a large country-house in Hertfordshire, her position being an as exceptionally favourable one as that of Lamb's father with his master; the family did not reside there, so that she was practically mistress of the place, trusted by her employers and respected by the neighbours. She used to have her grandsons to stay with her; and the wonders of the old deserted mansion made no less impression on Charles's mind than the stately terraces and gardens of the Temple. It is this house on which, under the name of Blakesmoor, he dwells so affectionately in the "Essays of Elia," recalling pictures of its faded splendour, interwoven with memories of his worthy grandmother and his elder brother John.

"I told how good she was to all her grandchildren, having us to the great house in the holidays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the twelve Cæsars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out—sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me—and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then,—and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew-trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir-apples, which were good for nothing but to look at—or in lying about upon the fresh grass with all the fine garden smells around me—or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth—or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings,—I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavours of peaches, nectarines, oranges,

and such-like common baits of children. . . . Then, in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grandchildren, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L—, because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out—and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries—and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy—for he was a good bit older than me—many a mile when I could not walk for pain;—and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death: and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him."

No small share in the education of this imaginative child had the old house, since pulled down, through every corner of which he had wandered at will, and every plank and panel, he says, for him had magic in it. In that neighbourhood it was popularly supposed to be the scene of the tragical ballad of the "Babes in the Wood." "Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts!" The place was said to be haunted by the ghosts of these two children, which, the grandmother believed, might be seen gliding up and down the great staircase at midnight, yet she did not fear to sleep alone, for "those innocents would do her no harm."

Not so with little Charles ; he was frightened, and had the maid to sleep with him. A child of his sensitive temperament was just the one to be tormented by night-fears. He describes himself as having been extremely eager to learn about witches and witchcraft, yet as much in dread of, as curious about the supernatural. Even when he grew up he sometimes thought that he could not have slept comfortably in the same village with a reputed witch. There was a touch of madness in the family which might have broken out in this boy, as it did once at a later period ; and most children then were nursed too much upon horrors and wonders.

"I was dreadfully alive to nervous terrors. The night-time, solitude, and the dark, were my hell. The sufferings I endured in this nature would justify the expression. I never laid my head on my pillow, I suppose, from the fourth to the seventh or eighth year of my life—so far as memory serves in things so long ago—without an assurance, which realised its own prophecy, of seeing some frightful spectre. Be old Stackhouse then acquitted in part, if I say, that to his picture of the Witch raising up Samuel—(O that old man covered with a mantle !)—I owe—not my midnight terrors, the hell of my infancy—but the shape and manner of their visitation. It was he who dressed up for me a hag that nightly sate upon my pillow—a sure bed-fellow, when my aunt or my maid was far from me. All day long, while the book was permitted me, I dreamed waking over his delineation, and at night (if I may use so bold an expression) awoke into sleep, and found the vision true. I durst not, even in the daylight, once enter the chamber where I slept, without my face turned to the window, aversely from the bed where my witch-ridden pillow was. That detestable picture, as I have said, gave the fashion to my dreams—if dreams they were—for the scene of them was invariably the room in which I lay. Had I never met with the picture, the fears would have come self-pictured in some shape or other—'headless bear, black man, or ape.'"

The allusion here is to a volume in his father's book-closet, Stackhouse's *History of the Bible*, and to an illustration in it of the Witch of Endor raising up Samuel, which he wished he had never seen, so strong a hold did that horribly detestable picture take of his imagination. Peter Parley, we remember, was also much impressed by this Witch of Endor.

It was indeed as well for Lamb that a "fortunate piece of ill-fortune" put an end to such dangerous studies. "Turning over the picture of the ark with too much haste, I unhappily made a breach in its ingenious fabric, driving my inconsiderate fingers right through the two larger quadrupeds—the elephant and the camel—that stare (as well they might) out of the two last windows next the steerage in that unique piece of naval architecture. Stackhouse was henceforth locked up and became an interdicted treasure."

With such occasional exceptions, we must suppose him dipping into every book that came within his reach. From an early age he was fond of reading, grave, precocious; no doubt he passed in the Temple for an "old-fashioned" child like Paul Dombey. Besides his father's books—and his father, though a servant, was a bit of a student—he and his sister had access to the library of Mr. Salt, the master and patron of the family. There is a well-known saying of his about the advantages of being turned young into a collection of good old English reading, and left to "browse at will upon that fair and wholesome pasturage." All his life he held strongly that a child's own tastes were the best index to what it should read.

"Think of what you would have been now," he writes to Coleridge, "if instead of being fed with tales and old wives' fables in childhood, you had been crammed with geography and natural history." Peter Parley would have found small favour in his eyes. Yet we can believe that Charles Lamb's early taste for books was something beyond that of most children. Already he would be giving some indication of his peculiar vein of reflection and humour, as appears from the story of his walking through a churchyard with his sister, and reading the eulogistic epitaphs on all the tombstones, which suggested to him that famous question, "Mary, where do the naughty people lie?"

Another of the scanty reminiscences of these days is his first play. In the "Essays of Elia" he describes the anxious excitement with which he looked forward to this event. "The afternoon had been wet, and the condition of our going (the elder folks and myself) was that the rain should cease. With what a beating heart did I watch from the windows the puddles, from the stillness of which I was taught to prognosticate the desired

cessation ! I seem to remember the last spurt, and the glee with which I ran to announce it. . . . But when we got in, and I beheld the green curtain that veiled a heaven to my imagination, which was soon to be disclosed—the breathless anticipations I endured ! I had seen something like it in the plate prefixed to *Troilus and Cressida*, in Rowe's Shakespeare—the tent scene with Diomede—and a sight of that plate can always bring back in a measure the feeling of that evening. The boxes at that time, full of well-dressed women of quality, projected over the pit : and the pilasters reaching down were adorned with a glistening substance (I know not what) under glass (as it seemed), resembling—a homely fancy—but I judged it to be sugar-candy—yet, to my raised imagination, divested of its homelier qualities, it appeared a glorified candy ! The orchestra lights at length arose, those 'fair Auroras !' Once the bell sounded. It was to ring out yet once again—and, incapable of the anticipation, I reposed my shut eyes in a sort of resignation upon the maternal lap. It rang the second time. The curtain drew up. I was not past six years old, and the play was *Artaxerxes* !

"I had dabbled a little in the *Universal History*—the ancient part of it—and here was the court of Persia. It was being admitted to a sight of the past. I took no proper interest in the action going on, for I understood not its import—but I heard the word *Darius*, and I was in the midst of *Daniel*. All feeling was absorbed in vision. Gorgeous vests, gardens, palaces, princesses passed before me. I knew not players. I was in *Persepolis* for the time, and the burning idol of their devotion almost converted me into a worshipper. I was awe-struck, and believed those significations to be something more than elemental fires. It was all enchantment and a dream. No such pleasure has since visited me but in dreams—*Harlequin's invasion* followed ; where, I remember, the transformation of the magistrates into reverend beldams seemed to me a piece of grave historic justice, and the tailor carrying his own head to be as sober a verity as the legend of *St. Denys*."

Such a boy might learn to read and write pretty much of himself, as birds learn to pick up crumbs. But, for the rudiments of education and to be kept out of mischief, he appears to have been sent to a certain Mr. William Bird, whose school

looked into a dingy garden in the passage leading from Fetter Lane to Bartlett's Buildings. It was a humble day-school, at which boys were taught in the morning and girls in the evening. The "Essays of Elia" are silent as to these first scholastic experiences; but in Hone's "Everyday Book," under the date of July 21, 1826, there is a letter signed C. L., the style of which cannot be mistaken, called forth by a casual mention of his old teacher in a previous number. It is curious to note how large a part of the impression left by a schoolmaster in these days belonged to his duties of correction. A boy was treated as a kind of whipping-top, whose wits must be kept going by frequent blows.

"I well remember Bird. He was a squat, corpulent, middle-sized man, with something of the gentleman about him, and that peculiar mild tone—especially while he was inflicting punishment—which is so much more terrible to children than the angriest looks and gestures. Whippings were not frequent; but when they took place, the correction was performed in a private room adjoining, whence we could only hear the complaints but saw nothing. This heightened the decorum and the solemnity. But the ordinary public chastisement was the bastinado, a stroke or two on the palm with that almost obsolete weapon now—the ferule. A ferule was a sort of flat ruler, widened at the inflicting end into a shape resembling a pear—but nothing like so sweet—with a delectable hole in the middle, to raise blisters like a cupping-glass. I have an intense recollection of that disused instrument of torture, and the malignancy, in proportion to the apparent mildness, with which its strokes were applied. The idea of a rod is accompanied with something ludicrous; but by no process can I look back upon this blister-raiser with anything but unmingled horror. To make him look more formidable—if a pedagogue had need of these heightenings—Bird wore one of those flowered Indian gowns, formerly in use with schoolmasters, the strange figures upon which we used to interpret into hieroglyphics of pain and suffering. But, boyish fears apart, Bird, I believe, was in the main a humane and judicious master.

"Oh, how I remember our legs wedged into those uncomfortable sloping desks, where we sat elbowing each other—and the injunctions to attain a free-hand, unattainable in that position; the first copy I wrote after, with its moral lesson, 'Art improves

Nature'; the still earlier pot-hooks and hangers, some traces of which I fear may yet be apparent in this manuscript; the truant looks sidelong to the garden, which seemed a mockery of our imprisonment; the prize for best spelling which had almost turned my head, and which to this day I cannot reflect upon without a vanity which I ought to be ashamed of—our little leaden inkstands, not separately subsisting, but sunk into the desks; the bright, punctually-washed morning fingers darkening gradually with another and another ink-spot: what a world of little associated circumstances, pains and pleasures mingling their quotas of pleasure, arise at the reading of those few simple words—'Mr. William Bird, an eminent Writer and Teacher of Languages and Mathematics, in Fetter Lane, Holborn.'

Thus passed the first seven years of Lamb's life. The next seven were spent in Christ's Hospital, to which his father got a presentation for him, probably through one of the Benchers of the Temple, or some other friend of his employer. Here the boy comes more clearly into view, as he appeared to himself in later life. "I must take leave to cherish the remembrance of that young master," he says, looking back on his *other me*, the child that he once was, "with as little reference, I protest, to this stupid changeling of five-and-forty, as if I had been a child of some other house, and not of my parents. I can cry over its patient small-pox at five and rougher medicaments. I can lay its poor fevered head upon the sick pillow at Christ's, and wake with it in surprise at the gentle posture of maternal tenderness hanging over it, that, unknown, had watched its sleep. I know how it shrank from any the least colour of falsehood. . . . I know how honest, how courageous (for a weakling) it was—how religious, how imaginative, how hopeful!" Such a boy was now about to pass through a rough ordeal in the Blue-Coat cloisters.

II.

EVERYBODY has heard of Christ's Hospital, founded by "that godly and royal child-King, Edward VI., the flower of the Tudor name—the young flower that was untimely cropt as it began to fill our land with its early odours—the boy-patron of

boys," who, when all allowance has been made for the virtues which are ascribed *ex-officio* to a prince, seems to have been, indeed, such a paragon of piety, learning, and amiability as appears seldom enough among sovereigns. At the age of eight his tutor tells of him how he had already made the eight parts of speech his subjects and servants, could decline any manner of Latin noun and verb, understood the three concords of grammar, and had come so far as to make forty or fifty pretty Latin verses. In short, as the learned doctor expresses it, in conceited courtly phrase, this royal student "hath expunged and utterly conquered a great number of the Captains of Ignorance." Himself so well able to appreciate the advantages of learning, young Edward was no less diligent in placing them within the reach of others; and when he died, at the age of sixteen, he had endowed sixteen grammar-schools, besides the great metropolitan institution which specially holds his name in grateful reverence.

Every London eye is familiar with the quaint costume of the Christ's Hospital boys: the long blue gown, girdled with a strap, the yellow stockings, the uncovered heads—to which, in Charles Lamb's time, was added a yellow petticoat and a round black muffin cap, since disused as mere ugly incumbrances. This is understood to have been a common dress of children of the period, and if it seems inconvenient and not over elegant now, we can ill afford to lose it from our dingy thoroughfares, where any spot of daring colour forms such a relief in the tame monotony of modern costume. The Londoner, indeed, has a kindliness for the blue coat and yellow stockings, albeit this motley garb is apt to raise derision among gaping provincials not to the manner born. The "Blues" themselves are understood to be not ashamed of their time-honoured livery, and their hatless state is said to be not unfavourable to health, whatever hair-dressers may think of it. There are other Blue-Coat schools in the country, and Green-Coats, and "charitable grinders," and the like, distinguished by eccentricities of costume enjoined by their pious founders; but these are *the* Blue-Coat boys. The tradition among them ran that their coats had once been of blue velvet, with silver buttons, and they cherished a lofty contempt for "charity-boys," scorning to be identified with such. In plain truth, however, Christ's Hospital, like most other public schools, was not only a charity-school to

begin with, but a charity of the lowest order ; yet none of its scholars are, or need be, otherwise than proud of it, after the long roll of well-known names which it has given to fame. About Charles Lamb's time it was notably rich in young minds destined to make their mark on the world. The most eminent of his fellow-pupils should be accounted the poet Coleridge ; but of all the boys who came out of Christ's Hospital, no one is better known to the mass of readers than Lamb himself, and no one has done more to make his old school celebrated by filial laudation. See how he speaks of it :

“ The Christ's Hospital or Blue-Coat boy, has a distinctive character of his own, as far removed from the abject qualities of a common charity-boy as it is from the disgusting forwardness of a lad brought up at some other of the public schools. There is *pride* in it, accumulated from the circumstances which I have described, as differencing him from the former ; and there is *restraining modesty*, from a sense of obligation and dependence, which must ever keep his deportment from assimilating to that of the latter. His very garb, as it is antique and venerable, feeds his self-respect ; as it is a badge of dependence, it restrains the natural petulance of that age from breaking out into overt acts of insolence. This produces silence and a reserve before strangers, yet not that cowardly shyness which boys mewed up at home will feel ; he will speak up when spoken to, but the stranger must begin the conversation with him. Within his bounds he is all fire and play ; but in the streets he steals along with all the self-concentration of a young monk. He is never known to mix with other boys ; they are a sort of laity with him. All this proceeds, I have no doubt, from the continual consciousness which he carries about him of the difference of his dress from that of the rest of the world ; with a modest jealousy over himself, lest, by over hastily mixing with common and secular playfellows, he should commit the dignity of his cloth. Nor let anyone laugh at this : for, considering the propensity of the multitude, and especially of the small multitudes, to ridicule anything unusual in dress—above all, where such peculiarity may be construed by malice into a mark of disparagement—this reserve will appear to be nothing more than a wise instinct in the Blue-Coat boy. That it is neither pride nor rusticity, at least that it has none of the offensive qualities of either, a stranger may soon satisfy

himself by putting a question to any of these boys : he may be sure of an answer couched in terms of plain civility, neither loquacious nor embarrassed. Let him put the same question to a parish-boy, or to one of the trencher-caps in the — cloisters, and the impudent reply of the one shall not fail to exasperate any more than the certain servility, and mercenary eye to reward, which he will meet with in the other, can fail to depress and sadden him."

All readers of Lamb must be aware of his love of mystifying and playing tricks upon us ; under a veil of personal reminiscence, this literary Proteus loved "to imply and twine with his own identity the griefs and affections of another," as well as to represent himself in whimsical disguises, so that we can never be quite sure how far fact and how far fancy go to make the stories and accounts of himself found here and there on his discursive pages. His schoolboy memories, it must be remembered, are given us in two versions. The foregoing quotation comes from the "Recollections of Christ's Hospital," one of his early productions, breathing nothing but gratitude and sentiment. In the "Essays of Elia" he gives a fuller account of the school, in his characteristic vein of humour, dwelling rather on the other side of the picture ; for he cannot but confess that there were shadows as well as lights in that hard school-life. Here, in his own affected phrase, it "arrides" him to criticise his former essay, jocosely bantering himself, as his manner is, from under the mask of the fictitious Elia. We are to understand that the governor who presented him to the school was a bencher of the Temple, whose influence made his lot not a little enviable among less favoured schoolfellows, such as Elia is represented to have been.

"In Mr. Lamb's 'Works,' published a year or two since, I find a magnificent eulogy on my old school, such as it was, or now appears to him to have been, between the years 1782 and 1789. It happens very oddly, that my own standing at Christ's was nearly corresponding with his ; and, with all gratitude to him for his enthusiasm for the cloisters, I think he has contrived to bring together whatever can be said in praise of them, dropping all the other side of the argument most ingeniously.

"I remember L—— at school ; and can well recollect that he had some peculiar advantages, which I and others of his

schoolfellows had not. His friends lived in town, and were near at hand ; and he had the privilege of going to see them, almost as often as he wished, through some invidious distinction, which was denied to us. The present worthy sub-treasurer to the Inner Temple can explain how that happened. He had his tea and hot rolls in a morning, while we were battenning upon our quarter of a penny loaf—our *crug*—moistened with attenuated small beer, in wooden piggings, smacking of the pitched leathern jack it was poured from. Our Monday's milk porritch, blue and tasteless, and the pease-soup of Saturday, coarse and choking, were enriched for him with a slice of 'extraordinary bread and butter,' from the hot-loaf of the Temple. The Wednesday's mess of millet, somewhat less repugnant—(we had three banyan to four meat days in the week)—was endeared to his palate with a lump of double-refined, and a smack of ginger (to make it go down the more glibly), or the fragrant cinnamon. In lieu of our half-pickled Sundays, or quite fresh-boiled beef on Thursdays (strong as *caro equina*), with detestable marigolds floating in the pail to poison the broth—our scanty mutton scrag on Fridays—and rather more savoury, but grudging, portions of the same flesh, rotten-roasted or rare, on the Tuesdays (the only dish which excited our appetites and disappointed our stomachs, in almost equal proportion)—he had his hot plate of roast veal, or the more tempting griskin (exotics unknown to our palates), cooked in the paternal kitchen (a great thing), and brought him daily by his maid or aunt ! I remember the good old relative (in whom love forbade pride) squatted down upon some odd stone in a by-nook of the cloisters, disclosing the viands (of higher regale than those cates which the ravens ministered to the Tishbite), and the contending passions of L—— at the unfolding. There was love for the bringer, shame for the thing brought, and the manner of its bringing ; sympathy for those who were too many to share in it ; and, at top of all, hunger (eldest, strongest of the passions !) predominant, breaking down the strong fences of shame and awkwardness, and a troubling over-consciousness."

Over and above these peculiar privileges, the shy, stammering Charles seems to have been a pet both with his masters and his schoolfellows. One of them has remarked, how in boyhood he was commonly spoken of by his intimates as *Charles* Lamb ; and so indeed it was with him in later life : this use of the

Christian name, there being no other Lamb in the school, will be significant to public-schoolboys. There must have been something in him strangely winning, turning his very helplessness into a shield, and disarming all the thoughtless malice of rough lads, for that gentle nature to have got so little hurt in the hurly-burly of a school like this. As a rule, it has to be the hearty, sturdy, thick-skinned sort of fellow to take kindly to such a school-life. Thoughtful, shrinking, and sensitive boys more often found it terribly hard to be happy, for the first years at least, in this or any school of that day. Lamb is understood to have had his friend Coleridge in view, when, as Elia, he pictures his other personality in the plight contrasted with his own better fortune.

"I was a poor friendless boy. My parents, and those who should care for me, were far away. Those few acquaintances of theirs, which they could reckon upon being kind to me in the great city, after a little forced notice, which they had the grace to take of me on my first arrival in town, soon grew tired of my holiday visits. They seemed to them to recur too often, though I thought them few enough ; and one after another they all failed me, and I felt myself alone among six hundred play-mates.

"O the cruelty of separating a poor lad from his early homestead ! The yearnings which I used to have towards it in those unfledged years ! How, in my dreams, would my native town (far in the west) come back, with its church and trees, and faces ! How I would wake weeping, and in the anguish of my heart exclaim upon sweet Calne in Wiltshire !"

To such a boy, the great cold school, with its mob of unsympathizing urchins, and its iron routine of duties and sufferings, must have indeed been long a cruel change from the warm fireside of home. The authorities made it no part of their care to soften this change ; the nursling of the muses had here a rough weaning. "The discipline at Christ's Hospital in my time," says Coleridge himself, "was ultra-Spartan ; all domestic ties were to be put aside. 'Boy !' I remember Boyer saying to me once when I was crying, the first day of my return after the holidays—'boy, the school is your father ! Boy, the school is your mother ! Boy, the school is your brother ; the school is your sister ; the school is your first cousin and your second cousin, and all the rest of your relations. Let's have no more

crying!" This was and is the theory of many educationalists, that the sweetest and purest affections are of no use in a boy's training but to be plucked up by the roots.

It cannot but be a bewildering experience for most Blue-Coat boys when they first equip themselves in these strange garments, feeling doubtful what to do with the unfamiliar bands and the awkward long skirts, hardly knowing themselves again in their new guise after they have been stripped to the skin for examination by the school surgeon. A group of candidates for such a metamorphosis will assemble together, attended by friends and relations to take leave of them on passing from the outer world; and it is said that the boys make curious observations on one another's mundane jackets, nor fail to exchange notes on the apparent gentility of their comrade's "people." Soon all this is changed. The young serpents have cast their various skins from head to foot, and come out afresh in one uniform of blue and yellow: type of the equality which is supposed to prevail among them henceforth, no distinctions being now recognisable but those of merit and place in the school. The boys are of all classes, chiefly sons of not too rich gentlemen and citizens of London. Leigh Hunt, another famous Blue, has an impression that in his day there were two schoolfellows from the same house, one the son of the master, the other of his coachman! The theory of equality is carried out in a great measure, yet boys would not be human beings if vanity did not creep in among them by some crevice. The simplest savage prides himself on his more absurd nose-ring or hideously ennobling tattoo-mark. So fashionable-minded Blues, Lamb tells us, could gratify themselves with hem-stitched bands and town-made shirts, and girdles of better quality with ornamental buckles; the upper boys were distinguished by broader ones, and even a monitor's superior shoe-strings might minister to the passion for openly surpassing one's fellows.

Professor d'Arcy Thompson, a writer of our own generation, who went through this transformation scene at the age of seven, and whose school reminiscences in his "Wayside Thoughts" are not unworthy of the brotherhood of writers who had their education at Christ's Hospital, compares himself and his companions in new-boyhood to a "swarm of unnaturally large bumble bees," when they had thus been encased in the garb that before long would sit upon them easily enough:

"an imitation horsehair-shirt, yellow worsted stockings, fustian knee-breeches, a yellow hearthrug-petticoat, and a long blue gown; a red leathern girdle went round my waist; a pair of parson's bibs hung down from my neck; and my hair was cut so short that I think I might have been used, with a little inconvenience to the user and myself, as a hairbrush. I cannot say what my poor dear mother thought of the grotesque-looking article before her. She was bewildered in the midst of her sorrow. I think she looked upon me as a ridiculously small parody upon John the Baptist, bound for years of sojourning in the wilderness, and of feeding there on locusts and wild honey. I went into the wilderness; but, for nine of my twelve years there spent, I fed mentally on locusts only, and the food was very disagreeable."

This little fellow began his career by going to Hertford, the country branch or nursery of Christ's Hospital; but Charles Lamb seems to have been plunged at once into the great London school, becoming a member of a family of some six hundred, part of the ceaseless machinery of the place, the slave of a bell which for years was to regulate every hour of his life.

The boys were divided into wards, each containing fifty beds, with two boys to a bed in these days. Beside the beds stood settles for their shoes or whatever little articles they could stow away as their own. These great bare dormitories had to stand to them as their best substitute for home; there they passed their time when not in the school, playground, or dining-hall. There were two fire-places in a ward, one appropriated to the monitor, the other to the nurse and her servant; neither, we may suppose, often available for the small boys with chilblained feet and chapped hands. The nurse was an important person, the official mother of this flock of fifty youngsters, upon whom depended no little part of their happiness and comfort. She had to perform truly motherly duties—seeing that they said their prayers, going round the ward to make sure of them being snug in bed, and keeping order with the help of the monitor, not without power of calling in the arm of more formidable authorities when needful. At all times, no doubt, there would be a great difference in nurses, as in faggots; but in Lamb's time there seems to have been a neglect of superintending the proceedings of these worthies,

who showed themselves more faithful to their own interests than to those of the boys. As Elia, he asks himself :

"Can L—— have forgotten the cool impunity with which the nurses used to carry away openly, in open platters, for their own tables, one out of two of every hot joint, which the careful matron had been seeing scrupulously weighed out for our dinners ? These things were daily practised in that magnificent apartment, which L—— (grown connoisseur since, we presume) praises so highly for the grand paintings 'by Verrio and others,' with which it is 'hung round and adorned.' But the sight of sleek, well-fed Blue-Coat boys in pictures was, at that time, I believe, little consolatory to him, or us, the living ones, who saw the better part of our provisions carried away before our faces by harpies ; and ourselves reduced (with the Trojan in the hall of Dido) 'to feed our mind with idle portraiture.'"

We have already gathered that the appetites of his school-fellows were by no means pampered. For breakfast they had a piece of dry bread, with nothing to help it down but small beer, "the washings of the brewers' aprons," the boys used to call this beverage, so bad that few did not prefer the pump. When butter came to be first proposed for an addition, the change was fiercely denounced by some friends of the school as likely to make its sons effeminate ; and how did not such sturdy conservatives prophesy the usual going to the dogs when milk and water was introduced ! Supper, at six or seven, consisted of the same ration of bread with a piece of cheese that some would save to eat with their breakfast, or, as might happen, to be appropriated by bullies. For dinner there was meat only every second day, and that, declares Leigh Hunt, in small slices fit for a mere child, which, moreover, proved often so tough as to be left half uneaten. On other days they had milk porridge or rice milk. Vegetables were unknown in their bill of fare. Once a month they had roast beef ; twice a year roast pork ; and once a year pease-pudding, treats eagerly looked forward to, and often bartered away long before they became due by needy boys who had then to go dinnerless, unless some charitable friend allowed them to nibble at his share of the rare luxury. Sometimes a collection would be made for the improvident youngsters who had thus sold their rights.

We need not be surprised that the elaborate and impressive

ceremony of grace performed before such meals was not heartily entered into by Charles Lamb and his schoolfellows. So much thankfulness to them seemed somewhat out of place. "I remember we were put to it to reconcile the phrase 'good creatures,' upon which the blessing rested, with the fare set before us, wilfully understanding that expression in a low and animal sense, till some one recalled a legend, which told how, in the golden days of Christ's, the young hospitallers were wont to have smoking joints of roast meat upon their nightly boards, till some pious benefactor, commiserating the decencies, rather than the palates, of the children, commuted our flesh for garments, and gave us—*horresco referens*—trousers instead of mutton."

Even in later days, when things had much improved, the boys were given to chanting a somewhat irreverent rhyme of their own, in which they contemptuously summed up their account of what they were expected to be so grateful for. But then, we know, even the luckiest schoolboys are hard to satisfy in the matter of diet.

"Sunday, all saints ;
Monday, all souls ;
Tuesday, all trenchers ;
Wednesday, all bowls ;
Thursday, tough Jack ;
Friday no better ;
Saturday pea-soup with bread and butter."

Old Blues, who could not but remember what it was to be on such short commons, and other well-wishers, had from time to time left various bequests for keeping their own memory on certain public occasions green in these hungry boys' minds—stomachs rather—by providing them with something nice for once in a way. Thus they were entitled to a distribution of raisins, with a penny into the bargain to help them down, on Good Friday—to roast beef, in memory of the gunpowder plot—to legs and shoulders of veal, on Queen Anne's birthday—to the same on the anniversary of her accession. Veal seems to have been considered an appropriate monument to Queen Anne ; and the boys must in all ages have been thankful that it was a monument not harder than brass. There are several such odd benefactions belonging to Christ's Hospital, some of which

have now been turned to better account in improving the daily dietary, where a century ago there was so large room for improvement. Yet it does not appear that these Blue-Coat boys were much the worse of having not too much to eat; perhaps our generation is more apt to err in the other direction.

Washing arrangements here were, as might be expected, of the most primitive character; wooden bowls and trenchers were used instead of crockery, a real luxury in these times; and all other furniture and utensils would be in keeping with this simplicity. So much for board and lodging; in the matter of attendance, a Blue-Coat boy had to do pretty nearly everything for himself, unless he had the right or the power to make others do it for him. There were officers called beadles, who filled the part of policemen and executioners; but such dignitaries could not be expected to stoop to menial work. The boys cleaned their own shoes, made their own beds, and divided other duties of household service among themselves on a peculiar system of general fagging known as the "trades." Every boy had to take upon himself a "trade," that is, some way of being useful for the rest of the ward. A small urchin might begin as candlestick bearer, or salt-boy; he was thought lucky if appointed to attend his nurse to the dining-hall, carrying her knife and fork, for that was a sign of being a favourite. Some trades, as unpopular, fell generally to the lot of new boys, such as that of cloth-boy, beer-boy, water-carrier, plate-boy, and bowl-boy; others were eagerly sought after, for privileges or perquisites attending them, since in an age of jobbery it was not to be expected that, for instance, the meat-boy and the bread-boy would handle the matters pertaining to their office without letting some crumbs stick to their own fingers, as well as showing favour to their friends in the process of cutting and carving. To be made knife-boy was thought a prize, for that official, in return for his arduous employment, had leave out every Saturday afternoon; we are told that the post was generally held by some upper boy, who duly enjoyed its privileges, and deputed a fag to do the real work. But the most coveted office was that of the buttery-boys, or clerks to the steward, who had to keep accounts and serve out stores, and sometimes were able not only to grow fat themselves, but to entertain their intimates at little banquets, waited on by juniors, who got for their share the fragments of the feast. The whole economy of the place seems

to have been as loose and corrupt as that of some government offices in these good old times, which is saying a great deal.

By good behaviour and seniority, a boy might hope to become monitor of his ward, a post not without the cares as well as the consolations of high rank. He would then be responsible for good order among the inmates of the ward, and was, moreover, expected to stand as much upon his dignity as a youngster of fourteen or fifteen can manage to do, not lightly associating with the vulgar herd. On the other hand, he had the right of sitting up till ten o'clock, a table of his own by the ward fire, a cupboard, and extra rations to put in it, with a boy to wait upon him. This, the monitor's boy, like some great man's head-servant, was a personage of consequence, too, in his way, quite above setting his hand to real work. As a rule, we are told by a more recent chronicler, he "enjoyed a sinecure, for his office was merely to help himself to a lion's share of what the monitors left; added to this, of course, he might sit up to attend to the monitors. This post was generally filled by a leading boy. Next to monitor's boy came monitor's boy's boy, who was supposed to polish the shoes and the bones as well, but in reality he only looked after the latter; after him followed in a descending scale the veritable fag, or monitor's boy's boy's boy, who, for a cold potatoe, or some execrable wash in the shape of tea, undertook to keep the crockery clean, scour out the cupboard, and was in fact a general scrub. His perquisites, if they warrant the name, were indeed hardly earned; but then, of course, he had a chance of being one day monitor's boy number one, or perhaps even monitor!" What a miniature parody on officialism!

The monitor, as badge of office, wore a silver medal suspended by a blue ribbon to his button hole. Usually he filled the corresponding post of marker in the school, though that depended on the pleasure of the head-master, whereas the monitors were appointed by the steward. This shows the curious dual government of Christ's Hospital; just as a Red Indian tribe had its civil chief and its war chief, with distinct powers, so here the masters, supreme in their own province, have nothing to do with the discipline and management out of school, which is vested in the steward, or warden, with his myrmidons, the beadles: a constitution that has somewhat stood in the

way of reforms introduced latterly to bring the school more into harmony with the scholastic spirit of the times.

Even the authority of the nurses and the monitors sometimes clashed ; but then it will readily be understood how the former had no little power of putting a pressure upon their juvenile colleagues, while these young monkeys were not without means of bringing the good dames to reason, as is hinted for us by the anonymous writer last quoted.

“ For instance, the nurse objects one night to the monitors having the frying-pan : the next evening she has a few friends to tea. Now, it is the duty of the nurse to be present at evening prayers—but before these commence, the monitor must call over the names. Very well ; our young gentleman calls them over as slowly as possible, whilst worthy madam is in an agony of fidgets to rejoin her friends. Follow this up by reading a very long chapter with due emphasis ; then give the boy that commences the psalm an idea that you would prefer the old 104th for that evening. The verses, as you know, are long, and the time very slow. Read the prayers carefully, and not so fast as if you were hurrying for your own supper. A combination of these delays will not tend to improve the nurse’s proposed comfortable evening.”

The course of teaching was different according to the career marked out for him by a boy’s turn and abilities. There were separate schools, the pupils of which jealously resented any prying on the part of the others into their respective rooms. In the Writing School, a plain English education was given to those destined for commercial life. In the Mathematical, or Navigation School, founded by King Charles II. for this purpose, boys were trained for sea-life. The Grammar School, divided into upper and lower, contained the intellectual cream of the place, and the cream of the cream was the choice band of “ Grecians ” and “ Deputy Grecians,” who, after working their way up through all the classes, became picked out thus to proceed in due time to the University. To become a Grecian was like getting into the House of Lords. These true aristocrats kept no terms with the other boys, except in the way of gracious condescension. They had studies, curtains to their beds, meals of their own, leave to come and go without restraint. They looked down even upon the monitors. In short, during the term of their Grecianship, they figured as far

more distinguished personages than they were ever likely to find themselves in after life, as Charles Lamb humorously complains of his lot in old age.

During these three culminating years of his school life, Professor d'Arcy Thompson would have us know, "I ignored all connection with my younger fellow-schoolboys, and lived in the serene contemplation of my own unapproachable greatness and wisdom. And here I would parenthetically remark that the most conceited peacock living might serve as a model of humility if contrasted with an average member of a senior class in an English public school." Common boys call a Grecian *Mr. So-and-So*. What can be more expressive of the loftiness of this Olympian order, who to reverent juniors must seem,

"To live and lie reclined

On the hills like gods together, careless of mankind ;
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurled
Far below them in the valleys !"

Charles Lamb, who only got the length of Deputy-Grecian, is eloquent on the same subject. Even in the last years of his life, writing to an old schoolfellow, he says : "I don't know how it is, but I keep my rank in fancy still since school-days. I can never forget I was a Deputy-Grecian ! And writing to you or Coleridge, besides affection, I feel a reverential deference as to Grecians still." This is how he writes of them in his "*Recollections of Christ's Hospital*," when the reverence was more freshly on him.

"These youths, from their superior acquirements, their superior age and stature, and the fewness of their numbers (for seldom above two or three at a time were inaugurated into that high order), drew the eyes of all, and especially of the younger boys, into a reverent observance and admiration. How tall they used to seem to us ! how stately would they pace along the cloisters ! while the play of the lesser boys was absolutely suspended, or its boisterousness at least allayed, at their presence ! Not that they ever beat or struck the boys—that would have been to have demeaned themselves—the dignity of their persons alone insured them all respect. The task of blows, of corporal chastisement, they left to the common monitors or heads of wards, who, it must be confessed, in our time, had rather too much license allowed them to oppress and misuse their inferiors ; and the interference of the Grecian, who may

be considered as the spiritual power, was not unfrequently called for to mitigate, by its mediation, the heavy unrelenting arm of this temporal power or monitor. In fine, the Grecians were the solemn muftis of the school. Eras were computed from their time ; it used to be said, such or such a thing was done when S——, or T——, was Grecian."

But the most formidable, if not the most imposing, caste in this community, were the King's boys of the Mathematical School. Upon the strength of being destined for the rudeness of sea-life, those embryo Jack-Tars seem to have been encouraged to cultivate insolence and brutality, along with fortitude, to an extent which would have met the approval of Lyncurgus at least. All the rest of the school held them in dread, and were held by them in contempt. It was etiquette with them never to swerve from a right line as they walked ; whoever happened to stand in their way must get out of it, or be pushed over with as much unconcern as if he had been a dog. The nurses were often rather afraid of them ; and the commonalty wondered privately what awful thing would befall if a Grecian and a King's boy chanced ever to come into collision. Their master, in Lamb's time, appears to have been the only person able to deal with them, yet it must have taken him all his strength to make any impression upon that part of the cuticle which was understood to be the seat of their conscience.

"As I ventured to call the Grecians the muftis of the school, the King's boys, as their character then was, may well pass for the janissaries. They were the terror of all the other boys, bred up under that hardy sailor as well as excellent mathematician and co-navigator with Captain Cook, William Wales. All his systems were adapted to fit them for the rough element which they were destined to encounter. Frequent and severe punishments, which were expected to be borne with more than Spartan fortitude, came to be considered less as inflictions of disgrace than as trials of obstinate endurance. To make his boys hardy and give them early sailor habits, seemed to be his only aim ; to this everything was subordinate. Moral obliquities, indeed, were sure of receiving their full recompense, for no occasion of laying on the lash was ever let slip ; but the effects expected to be produced from it were something very different from contrition or mortification. There was in William Wales a perpetual fund of humour, a constant glee about him, which,

heightened by an inveterate provincialism of North-country dialect, absolutely took away the sting from his severities. His punishments were a game at patience, in which the master was not always worst contented when he found himself at times overcome by his pupil. What success this discipline had, or how the effects of it operated upon the after-lives of these King's boys, I cannot say; but I am sure that, for the time, they were absolute nuisances to the rest of the school. Hardy, brutal, and often wicked, they were the most graceless lump in the whole mass; older and bigger than the other boys (for, by the system of their education, they were kept longer at school by two or three years than any of the rest, except the Grecians), they were a constant terror to the younger part of the school; and some who may read this, I doubt not, will remember the consternation into which the juvenile fry of us were thrown, when the cry was raised in the cloisters, that *the First Order was coming*—for so they termed the first form or class of those boys. Still, these sea-boys answered some good purposes in the school. They were the military class among the boys, foremost in athletic exercises, who extended the fame of the prowess of the school far and near; and the apprentices in the vicinage, and sometimes the butchers' boys in the neighbouring market, had sad occasion to attest their valour."

Lamb's own lot was cast in the Grammar School, and during the first few years at least it seemed to have fallen in a pleasant enough place for idle boys.

"We had plenty of exercise and recreation *after* school hours; and for myself, I must confess that I was never happier than *in* them. The Upper and the Lower Grammar Schools were held in the same room, and an imaginary line only divided their bounds. Their character was as different as that of the inhabitants on the two sides of the Pyrenees. The Rev. James Boyer was the Upper Master, but the Rev. Matthew Field presided over that portion of the apartment of which I had the good fortune to be a member. We lived a life as careless as birds. We talked and did just what we pleased, and nobody molested us. We carried an accidence, or a grammar, for form, but, for any trouble it gave us, we might take two years in getting through the verbs deponent, and another two in forgetting all that we had learned about them. There was now and then the formality of saying

a lesson, but if you had not learned it, a brush across the shoulders (just enough to disturb a fly) was the sole remonstrance. Field never used the rod, and in truth he wielded the cane with no great good-will—holding it ‘like a dancer.’ It looked in his hands rather like an emblem than an instrument of authority, and an emblem, too, he was ashamed of. He was a good easy man, that did not care to ruffle his own peace, nor perhaps set any great consideration upon the value of juvenile time. He came among us now and then, but often stayed away whole days from us; and when he came it made no difference to us—he had his private room to retire to, the short time he stayed, to be out of the sound of our noise. Our mirth and uproar went on. We had classics of our own, without being beholden to ‘insolent Greece or haughty Rome,’ that passed current among us—‘Peter Wilkins,’ ‘The Adventures of the Hon. Captain Robert Boyle,’ ‘The Fortunate Blue-Coat Boy,’ and the like. Or we cultivated a turn for mechanic and scientific operations; making little sun-dials of paper; or weaving those ingenious parentheses called *cat-cradles*; or making dry peas to dance upon the end of a tin-pipe; or studying the art military over that laudable game ‘French and English,’ and a hundred other such devices to pass away the time—mixing the useful with the agreeable—as would have made the souls of Rousseau and John Locke chuckle to have seen us.

“Matthew Field belonged to that class of modest divines who affect to mix in equal proportion the *gentleman*, the *scholar*, and the *Christian*; but, I know not how, the first ingredient is generally found to be the predominating dose in the composition. He was engaged in gay parties, or with his courtly bow at some episcopal levee, when he should have been attending upon us. He had for many years the classical charge of a hundred children during the four or five first years of their education, and his very highest form seldom proceeded further than two or three of the introductory fables of Phædrus. How things were suffered to go on thus I cannot guess. Boyer, who was the proper person to have remedied these abuses, always affected—perhaps felt—a delicacy in interfering in a province not strictly his own. I have not been without my suspicions that he was not altogether displeased at the contrast we presented to his end of the school. We were a sort of Helots to

his young Spartans. He would sometimes with ironic deference send to borrow a rod of the Under Master, and then, with sardonic grin, observe to one of his upper boys 'how neat and fresh the twigs looked.' While his pale students were battering their brains over Xenophon and Plato, with a silence as deep as that enjoined by the Samite, we were enjoying ourselves at our ease in our little Goshen. We saw a little into the secrets of his discipline, and the prospect did but the more reconcile us to our lot. His thunders rolled innocuous for us : his storms came near, but never touched us ; contrary to Gideon's miracle, while all around were drenched, our fleece was dry. His boys turned out the better scholars ; we, I suspect, have the advantage in temper. His pupils cannot speak of him without something of terror allaying their gratitude ; the remembrance of Field comes back with all the soothing images of indolence, and summer slumbers, and work like play, and innocent idleness, and Elysian exemptions, and life itself a 'playing holiday.' "

Leigh Hunt quite bears out this account of the incompetent master : "He came late of a morning, went away soon in the afternoon, and used to walk up and down, languidly bearing his cane as if it were a lily, and hearing our eternal *Dominuses* and *As in præsenti*s with an air of ineffable endurance. Often he did not hear at all. It was a joke with us when any of our friends came to the door and we asked his permission to go to them, to address him with some preposterous question wide of the mark, to which he used to assent. We would say, for instance, 'Are you not a great fool, sir?' Or, 'Isn't your daughter a pretty girl?' To which he would reply, 'Yes, child.' When he condescended to hit us with the cane, he made a face as if he were taking physic."

Great must have been the change from such an easy-going disciplinarian as Field to the tender mercies of the Upper Master, whom his knot of famous pupils have made as notable a name among schoolmasters as Horace's Orbilius, though, as it is mildly put, his temper was "a little too hasty to leave the more nervous of us quite at our ease to do justice to his merits in those days." It pleases the humoursome Elia to represent himself as a mere spectator of Boyer's severities—"we occasionally heard sounds of the Ululantes, and caught glances of Tartarus"—yet before attaining the height of Deputy-Grecian,

he must surely have felt as well as seen this "rabid pedant's" prowess. He is described as a short punchy man, with large face and hands, an aquiline nose, and a cruel eye behind his spectacles, duly dressed in clerical black with a powdered wig. This wig was, as it were, the weather-glass by which "well had the boding tremblers learned" to presage the signs of the day.

"He had two wigs, both pedantic, but of different omen. The one serene, smiling, fresh powdered, betokening a mild day. The other, an old, discoloured, unkempt, angry caxon, denoting frequent and bloody execution. Woe to the school when he made his morning appearance in his *passy*, or *passionate wig*. No comet expounded surer. J. B. had a heavy hand. I have known him double his knotty fist at a poor trembling child (the maternal milk hardly dry upon its lips) with a 'Sirrah, do you presume to set your wits at me?' Nothing was more common than to see him make a headlong entry into the school-room, from his inner recess or library, and, with turbulent eye, singling out a lad, roar out, 'Od's my life, sirrah,' (his favourite adjuration) 'I have a great mind to whip you,'—then, with as sudden a retracting impulse, fling back into his lair, and, after a cooling lapse of some minutes (during which all but the culprit had totally forgotten the context), drive headlong out again, piecing out his imperfect sense, as if it had been some Devil's Litany, with the expletory yell—'and I WILL, too.' In his gentler moods, when the *rabidus furor* was assuaged, he had resort to an ingenious method, peculiar, for what I have heard, to himself, of whipping the boy, and reading the debates at the same time; a paragraph, and a lash between; which in those times, when parliamentary oratory was most at a height and flourishing in these realms, was not calculated to impress the patient with a veneration for the diffuser graces of rhetoric."

Lamb's brother-stammerer does not speak so sportively as he does of Boyer, though he admits him to have been a laborious and conscientious teacher. This conscientious teacher once knocked out one of Hunt's teeth with the back of a book in a fit of impatience with his stammering. "When you were out in your lesson, he turned upon you a round staring eye like a fish; and he had a trick of pinching you under the chin and by the lobes of the ears till he would make the blood come. He has many times lifted a boy off the ground in this way.

He was indeed a proper tyrant, passionate and capricious. . . . I have seen him beat a sickly-looking, melancholy boy about the head and ears till the poor fellow, hot, dry-eyed, and confused, seemed lost in bewilderment." Boyer was not even fair—a virtue which covers many sins in the eyes of schoolboys. He would take violent likes and dislikes, and while so rough with common boys, was found "honeying at the whisper of a lord." There were at that time a few sprigs of nobility or sons of rich men in the school as a kind of parlour boarders, and it was laughable to see the master's patience with one of these, sitting "with his arm round his tall waist, helping him to his Greek verbs, as a nurse does bread and milk to an infant." On the other hand, he would spite and persecute some boys in the most shameless manner. Such a luckless object of his special attention was a certain C—— mentioned by Leigh Hunt. One day Boyer, coming into the schoolroom, caught this fellow and three others out of their places. He was not in a very bad humour, and did not seem inclined to be hard on them till he saw C——. Then he turned to a Grecian, bidding him make these boys draw lots which should be punished, as he had not time to flog them all. The lots were drawn, and C—— got off. "Oh, oh ! you have escaped, have you, sir ?" said the master, when this proved to be the result. Then, pulling out his watch, he observed that after all he had time to punish them all, "and, sir,"—to C—— "I'll begin with you !"

"Often," says Leigh Hunt, "did I wish that I were a fairy in order to play him tricks like a Caliban. We used to sit and fancy what we should do with his wig ; how we would hamper and vex him ; 'put knives in his pillow and halters in his pew.' To venture on a joke in our own mortal persons was like playing with Polyphemus. One afternoon, when he was nodding with sleep over a lesson, a boy of the name of Meader, who stood behind him, ventured to take a pin and begin advancing with it up his wig. The hollow exhibited between the wig and the nape of the neck invited him. The boys encouraged this daring act of gallantry. Nods and becks, and then whispers of 'Go it, M—— !' gave more and more valour to his hand. On a sudden the master's head falls back ; he starts, with eyes like a shark, and seizing the unfortunate culprit, who stood helpless in the act of holding the pin, caught hold of him, fiery with passion. A 'swingeing task' ensued, which

kept him at home all the holidays. One of these tasks would consist of an impossible quantity of Virgil, which the learner, unable to retain it at once, wasted his heart and soul out 'to get up' till it was too late.

"Sometimes, however, our despot got into a dilemma, and then he did not know how to get out of it. A boy now and then would be roused into open and fierce remonstrance. I recollect S——, afterwards one of the mildest of preachers, starting up in his place and pouring forth on his astonished hearer a torrent of invectives and threats, which the other could only answer by looking pale and uttering a few threats in return. Nothing came of it. He did not like such matters to go before the governors. Another time, Favell, a Grecian, a youth of high spirit whom he had struck, went to the school-door, opened it, and turning round with the handle in his grasp, told him he would never set foot again in the place, unless he promised to treat him with more delicacy. 'Come back, child; come back!' said the other, pale and in a faint voice. There was a dead silence. Favell came back, and nothing more was done."

Strange as it may appear, the best of his pupils are found in after-life speaking gratefully of what they owed to such a brutal pedagogue. Coleridge, "that sensible fool," as Boyer had called the boy, is said to have had horrible dreams of him all his life; but when he heard that his old master was dying, he had nothing harsher to say than that it would be well for the cherubim who took him to heaven to have no more than faces and wings, or he would certainly give them a taste of his prowess with the birch.

When a boy got out of the hands of the masters, he had to do with the bullies beside him at all hours. We may imagine how bullying must have flourished in that school with such good copies set it, and some of us know only too well how a timid helpless child's life may be made a burden to him through the careless or thoughtless cruelty of his schoolfellows. Boy's inhumanity to boy is an old story. The worst of all oppressors here seem to have been the monitors, in a manner licensed to tyranny, and younger than those lads who at other public schools are trusted with power over their juniors.

"'Tis not the distant emperor moves their fear,
But the proud viceroy, who is ever near."

Such power, at the best, must be carefully limited if it is not to be abused as it was at Christ's Hospital.

For once our gentle hearted Charles loses his temper in recalling this tyranny of the monitors. As to his own case, he professes that the influence of his "governor" was a protection to him against both masters and monitors. "Any complaint which he had to make was sure of being attended to;" but in the person of Elia he describes himself as suffering like the rest.

"The oppressions of these young brutes are heart-sickening to call to recollection. I have been called out of my bed, and *waked for the purpose*, in the coldest winter nights—and this is not once, but night after night—in my shirt, to receive the discipline of a leathern thong, with eleven other sufferers, because it pleased my callow overseer, when there has been any talking heard after we were gone to bed, to make the six last beds in the dormitory, where the youngest children of us slept, answerable for an offence they neither dared to commit, nor had the power to hinder. The same execrable tyranny drove the younger part of us from the fires, when our feet were perishing with snow; and, under the cruellest penalties, forbade the indulgence of a drink of water, when we lay in sleepless summer nights, fevered with the season, and the day's sports.

"There was one H——, who, I learned, in after days, was seen expatiating some maturer offence in the hulks. (Do I flatter myself in fancying that this might be the planter of that name, who suffered—at Nevis, I think, or St. Kitts,—some few years since? My friend Tobin was the benevolent instrument of bringing him to the gallows.) This petty Nero actually branded a boy, who had offended him, with a red-hot iron; and nearly starved forty of us, with exacting contributions, to the one-half of our bread, to pamper a young ass, which, incredible as it may seem, with the connivance of the nurse's daughter (a young flame of his), he had contrived to smuggle in, and keep upon the leads of the *ward*, as they called our dormitories. This game went on for better than a week, till the foolish beast, not able to fare well but he must cry roast meat—happier than Caligula's minion, could he have kept his own counsel—but foolisher, alas! than any of his species in the fables—waxing fat, and kicking, in the fulness of bread, one unlucky minute would needs proclaim his good fortune to

the world below ; and, laying out his simple throat, blew such a ram's-horn blast, as (toppling down the walls of his own Jericho) set concealment any longer at defiance. The client was dismissed, with certain attentions, to Smithfield ; but I never understood that the patron underwent any censure on the occasion. This was in the stewardship of L——'s admired Perry."

Bullying is said to be a thing of the past in most public schools, and we can well believe that this good old institution is everywhere much shorn of its former luxuriance. But down to D'Arcy Thompson's day it still flourished at Christ's Hospital, whatever may be the state of things at present. "The bullies, or *brassers*, as they were termed, were as terrible and as daring as Cilician pirates. On a general holiday, they would be stationed near the gate when the little fellows came home at evening from their visits, laden with cake and fruit, and rich with small silver coins. The majority would reach their beds with pockets as empty as they had left withal that morning. Some cautious urchins would devour all their treasures upon the road, and would pay dearly—not too dearly—for their caution or temerity. The evil at length became so flagrant that the cry of the oppressed went up to the ears of the headmaster. A special commission of inquiry was instituted ; disclosures of the most appalling kind were made ; condign vengeance was taken in public upon dozens of the pirates, and the land had rest for years, and has rest, I trust, to this day."

This reminds us of the story of Lamb's cake, in that famous "Dissertation upon Roast Pig," which is so much in his characteristic vein, that we must have it forthwith, even at expense of a digression.

"My good old aunt, who never parted from me at the end of a holiday without stuffing a sweetmeat, or some nice thing, into my pocket, had dismissed me one evening with a smoking plum-cake, fresh from the oven. In my way to school (it was over London Bridge) a grey-headed old beggar saluted me (I have no doubt, at this time of day, that he was a counterfeit). I had no pence to console him with, and in the vanity of self-denial, and the very coxcombry of charity, schoolboy-like, I made him a present of—the whole cake ! I walked on a little, buoyed up, as one is on such occasions, with a sweet soothing

of self-satisfaction ; but before I had got to the end of the bridge, my better feelings returned, and I burst into tears, thinking how ungrateful I had been to my good aunt, to go and give her good gift away to a stranger that I had never seen before, and who might be a bad man for aught I knew ; and then I thought of the pleasure my aunt would be taking in thinking that I—I myself, and not another—would eat her nice cake—and what should I say to her the next time I saw her—how naughty I was to part with her pretty present !—and the odour of that spicy cake came back upon my recollection, and the pleasure and the curiosity I had taken in seeing her make it, and her joy when she had sent it to the oven, and how disappointed she would feel that I had never had a bit of it in my mouth at last—and I blamed my impertinent spirit of almsgiving, and out-of-place hypocrisy of goodness ; and above all I wished never to see the face again of that insidious, good-for-nothing old grey impostor.”

The ordinary system of fagging has at least the merit of bringing into bounds the exactions that, some tell us, are inevitable among boys of different ages, though, on the other hand, should boys and men not rather be taught to protect instead of enslaving weakness ? No such system was recognised among these lads, as appears from an episode of Leigh Hunt's schoolboy trials, in which the fortitude he had learned from “Sandford and Merton” stood him in good stead. A monitor had taken it into his head to force the younger boy to fag for him individually, beyond his due proportion of statute labour for the good of the community.

“I had so little objection to serve out of love that there is no office I could not have performed for goodwill, but it had been given out that I had determined not to be a menial on any other terms, and the monitor in question undertook to bring me to reason. He was a mild, good-looking boy about fourteen, remarkable for the neatness and even elegance of his appearance. Receiving the refusal for which he had been prepared, he showed me a knot in a long handkerchief, and told me that I should receive a lesson from that handkerchief every day, with the addition of a fresh knot every time, unless I chose to alter my mind. I did not choose. I received the daily or rather nightly lesson, for it was then most convenient to strip me, and I came out of the ordeal in triumph.

I never was fag to anybody, never made anybody's bed or cleaned his shoes, or was the boy to get his tea, much less expected to stand as a screen for him before the fire, which I have seen done; though, upon the whole, the boys were very mild governors."

The instances brought forward do not certainly look like very mild government; yet, perhaps, this may be counted so as compared with other public schools of the time. Not many years ago, it will be remembered, a poor little Christ's Hospital boy hanged himself in dread of punishment for running away from school in consequence of rough usage at the hands of a monitor. This, in our day, is no doubt a peculiar and exceptional case, such as will occur in the best-managed schools; but at the end of last century, we need not be surprised to find running away so common, that terrible penalties were attached to it, increased for the second and the third offence.

It was always difficult for the daring criminal to get clear away; his clothes betrayed him. When caught and brought back, he would be shut up in play-hours, and at night had a wooden gate fixed before his bed, so as to convert it into a kind of cage. Sometimes the yellow lining of his coat was turned out, or he had a large R of red or yellow cloth fastened to his back, his hair being cut close to the head, convict fashion, all over and above the flogging which was a matter of course. Yet these signs of disgrace only marked him out more clearly as a hero and a martyr among his schoolfellows—not a few of whom would have liked to do what he had done, had they but dared.

"I was a hypochondriac lad," says Elia; "and the sight of a boy in fetters, upon the day of my first putting on the blue clothes, was not exactly fitted to assuage the natural terrors of initiation. I was of tender years, barely turned of seven; and had only read of such things in books, or seen them but in dreams. I was told he had *run away*. This was the punishment for the first offence. As a novice I was soon after taken to see the dungeons. These were little, square Bedlam cells, where a boy could just lie at his length upon straw and a blanket—a mattress, I think, was afterwards substituted—with a peep of light, let in askance, from a prison orifice at top, barely enough to read by. Here the poor boy was locked in by himself all day, without sight of any but the porter who

brought him his bread and water—*who might not speak to him*;—or of the beadle, who came twice a week to call him out to receive his periodical chastisement, which was almost welcome, because it separated him for a brief interval from solitude:—and here he was shut up by himself *of nights* out of the reach of any sound, to suffer whatever horrors the weak nerves, and superstition incident to his time of life might subject him to.* This was the penalty for the second offence. Wouldst thou like, reader, to see what became of him in the next degree?

"The culprit who had been a third time an offender, and whose expulsion was at this time deemed irreversible, was brought forth, as at some solemn *auto da fé*, arrayed in uncouth and most appalling attire—all trace of his late 'watchet weeds' carefully effaced, he was exposed in a jacket resembling those which London lamp-lighters formerly delighted in, with a cap of the same. The effect of this divestiture was such as the ingenious devisers of it could have anticipated. With his pale and frightened features, it was as if some of those disfigurements in Dante had seized upon him. In this disguise he was brought into the hall (*L——'s favourite state-room*), where awaited him the whole number of his schoolfellows, whose joint lessons and sports he was thenceforth to share no more; the awful presence of the steward, to be seen for the last time; of the executioner beadle, clad in his state robe for the occasion; and of two faces more, of direr import, because never but in these extremities visible. These were governors, two of whom by choice, or charter, were always accustomed to officiate at these *Ultima Supplicia*; not to mitigate (so at least we understood it), but to enforce the uttermost stripe. Old Bamber Gascoigne, and Peter Aubert, I remember, were colleagues on one occasion, when the beadle turning rather pale, a glass of brandy was ordered to prepare him for the mysteries. The scourging was, after the old Roman fashion, long and stately. The lictor accompanied the criminal quite round the hall. We were generally too faint with attending to the previous disgusting circumstances to make accurate report with our eyes of the degree of corporal suffering inflicted. Report, of course, gave out the back knotty and livid. After scourging, he was made

* One or two instances of suicide, or attempted suicide, accordingly, at length convinced the governors of the impolicy of this part of the sentence, and the midnight torture to the spirits was dispensed with.

over, in his *San Benito*, to his friends, if he had any (but commonly such poor runagates were friendless), or to his parish officer, who, to enhance the effect of the scene, had his station allotted to him on the outside of the hall-gate."

To boys living under such terrors, holidays could not but have been welcome. The old régime granted only one month's vacation in the year: with what longing that August would be looked forward to, may be well imagined. The ordinary notched stick and marked-off almanack were not enough for Blue-Coat boys' eagerness. It was a custom among them to begin recording the date, as many nights before the holidays as there were beds in a ward, by turning over a bedstead each night and bumping the occupant in order to the chant of "So many days, so many days, so many days to sleeping out!" "My *turn* to-night; yours to-morrow," was an expression of welcome significance in the school. And as the process drew near the end of the row of beds, it increased in enthusiastic vehemence, so that those boys who came last had to pay the greatest tribute of rough handling to the public joy. Charles Lamb does not mention this custom; but with its bold disregard of the individual in the general feeling, it has an air of the most venerable antiquity.

Lamb has hinted to us how he spent, or may have spent, his holidays in the delights of country life. There was a race of more unhappy boys, those who had no homes or friends to go to, and must pass the bright August days on the baking flags of their playground, with such solace as they could find in excursions under charge of a beadle to the swimming bath of the Peerless Pool, or to the nearest suburban lanes and commons. Doleful must have been the faces of these unfortunates, when their merry companions went off with no care but not to miss the coach. But when Black Monday came, bringing with it the unwilling return, then the friendless youngster was master of the situation. It became his turn to look happy; his holiday seemed to begin when that of the others ended. "He was the first to greet us on our return, and was always most profuse in his inquiries as to the health of our mother, and the well-being of our grandmother. 'Shall I clean your honour's boots?' says one. 'Would you like your breakfast in bed to-morrow morning?' says another. 'Shall I carry your honour's parcel?' says a third." Cold comfort would such mockery be to those

fresh from the warm joys of home; but even thus, says the cynic, do we find something not unpleasing in the adversity of our friends. The training of Christ's Hospital was little calculated to foster sympathy.

Christmas-Day the boys did their best to celebrate for themselves, with the help of general good humour, freedom from restraint, and such reasonable dainties as they could procure from outside friends or their saved-up pocket-money. It was the way with them to observe a fast at dinner-time, to do the better justice to their own banquets, succeeded by boisterous revelry throughout the long evening, nurses, monitors, and all for once laying aside their dignity to join in the fun.

"Let me have leave to remember," says Charles Lamb, "the festivities at Christmas, when the richest of us would club our stock to have a gaudy day, sitting round the fire replenished to the height with logs; and the penniless, and he that could contribute nothing, partook in all the mirth, and in some of the substantialities of the feasting: the carol sung by night at that time of the year, which, when a young boy, I have so often laid awake from seven (the hour of going to bed) till ten, when it was sung by the older boys and monitors, and have listened to, in their rude chanting, till I have been transported to the fields of Bethlehem, and the song which was sung at that season by angels' voices to the shepherds."

Easter was also a great time at Christ's Hospital. The boys, then, had new clothing served out to them; and Good Friday was a day, not so much of austere self-mortification, as of mutual criticism on such pomps and vanities as can be displayed in a Blue Coat dress. An absurd custom obtained of each boy's wearing on his breast a label with the words "He is risen," to which these juvenile theologians, not to be behind-hand in orthodox fervour, had added the singing of a rhyme—

"He is risen! He is risen!
Send the wretched Jews to prison!"

a survival from the spirit of those good old days when to stone and beat Jews was considered an edifying and appropriate Lenten exercise.

The Lord Mayor was and is the patron saint of Easter-time. Not only did he and the other civic authorities attend church with the boys on Easter Sunday and Monday, but on Easter Tuesday, by time-honoured privilege, they visited the Mansion

House, where every boy got a new silver shilling, a bun, and a glass of wine, along with "the festive questions and civic pleasantries of the dispensing aldermen, which were more to us than all the rest of the banquet;" after which his lordship and train again accompanied them to church. These coins were counted as no common medium of exchange; they were often treasured as relics, and sometimes a silver salt-spoon would be made out of them, as a memorial of the receiver's school-years. The true Blue had a soul above petty squandering of such donations. The pennies which, along with a bag of plums, fell by right to each boy over thirteen on presenting himself every Good Friday at All Hallows' Church, Lombard Street, were usually given away to some poor old man or woman waiting at the porch in this expectation: it was not thought good taste to carry home these copper alms.

The mathematical boys had a gala-day of their own on the first Drawing-room of the season, when the flower of them enjoyed the honour of being presented to his Majesty, exhibiting their charts and drawings, and going away not without royal largess.

In harmony with the religious character of the institution, all the saint's days, as at most public schools, used to be marked by a holiday; but in after times, Charles Lamb had to regret the abolition of "those consolatory interstices, and sprinklings of freedom, through the four seasons—the *red-letter days*, now become, to all intents and purposes, *dead-letter days*. There was Paul, and Stephen, and Barnabas—

'Andrew and John, men famous in old times,'

—we were used to keep all their days holy, as long back as I was at school at Christ's. I remember their effigies, by the same token, in the old Basket Prayer-Book. There hung Peter in his uneasy posture—holy Bartlemy in the troublesome act of flaying, after the famous Marsyas by Spagnoletti.—I honoured them all, and could almost have wept the defalcation of Iscariot—so much did we love to keep holy memories sacred: only methought I a little grudged at the coalition of the *better Jude* with Simon—clubbing (as it were) their sanctities together, to make up one poor gaudy-day between them—as an economy unworthy of the dispensation. These were bright visitations in a scholar's and a clerk's life—'far off their coming shone.'

I was as good as an almanac in those days. I could have told you such a saint's-day falls out next week or the week after."

And yet, by his own account, such holidays could not always have been very delightful, except in the sense of being free from Boyer. It was all very well for the boys who had friends' houses where they would be sure of a welcome—a warm one if the master happened to be an old Blue, not ignorant of their evil lot, and having learned thus how to minister to their wants. But the time must have often hung heavily on the hands of those who had nowhere to go, and could get nothing to eat if they were minded for a long ramble: such was the feigned case of the friendless Elia.

"To this late hour of my life, I trace impressions left by the recollection of those friendless holidays. The long warm days of summer never return but they bring with them a gloom from the haunting memory of those *whole-day leaves*, when, by some strange arrangement, we were turned out, for the live-long day, upon our own hands, whether we had friends to go to, or none. I remember those bathing-excursions to the New River, which L—— recalls with such relish, better, I think, than he can—for he was a home-seeking lad, and did not much care for such water-pastimes. How merrily we would sally forth into the fields; and strip under the first warmth of the sun; and wanton like young dace in the streams; getting us appetites for noon, which those of us that were penniless (our scanty morning crust long since exhausted) had not the means of allaying—while the cattle, and the birds, and the fishes, were at feed about us and we had nothing to satisfy our cravings—the very beauty of the day, and the exercise of the pastime, and the sense of liberty, setting a keener edge upon them! How faint and languid, finally, we would return, towards night-fall, to our desired morsel, half-rejoicing, half-reluctant, that the hours of our uneasy liberty had expired!

"It was worse in the days of winter, to go prowling about the streets objectless—shivering at cold windows of print-shops, to exact a little amusement; or haply, as a last resort in hopes of a little novelty, to pay a fifty-times repeated visit (where our individual faces should be as well known to the warden as those of his own charges) to the Lions in the Tower—to whose levee, by courtesy immemorial, we had a prescriptive title to admission."

The one day which should have made a weekly oasis in the desert of tasks and hardships, seems to have been ill turned to account by the mistaken zeal of pious rulers. Sunday was a time of weariness to the flesh and the spirit alike. The religious exercises enjoined upon this flock of children and restless urchins comprised interludes of catechism and heartless devotions between no less than three sermons, often inaudible, generally unintelligible, and almost always dull. This was not the way to make boys think of religious worship, "I have been there and still would go." The whole of them attended Christ Church, Newgate Street, fidgeting and yawning through a long tedious service, crammed into an uncomfortable gallery, with the steward perched up aloft to note down retribution for any graceless urchin who should be tempted into open show of irreverence. Once a year the young congregation had their revenge on this official—when the parable of the Unjust Steward came to be read. Then, like one boy, they turned their battery of mutely accusing eyes upon him, while he, good man, had to sit through the ordeal with whatever affectation of unconsciousness he could command.

The one treat of Sunday was an extra hour in bed: the boys had not to get up till seven. "Oh, the deliciousness of that hour!" exclaims D'Arcy Thompson, but has a very different story to tell of the rest of the day. "We breakfasted at eight, and had our service of psalms and hymns and prayer; at a quarter to eleven we went to church, and were there engaged for a good two hours. Our Bibles were very large, and we had to kneel during a considerable part of the service on hard boards, with no rest for our arms or heads. The misery of the Litany was beyond all words. It was a very Sahara of tribulation. At the end of it we little sinners were miserable enough. On leaving church we went at once to the dining-hall, and dinner was preluded with a lengthened service of reading, psalmody, and prayer; immediately after dinner we repaired to our wards, and spent an hour in the repetition of catechism and psalms, and in the reading of portions of Scripture. At the ringing of a bell, we descended to the cloisters, formed into ranks, and marched again to church. On leaving church, after a short time allowed for walking in the playground, we were rung up into the dining-hall, and a portentously long service heralded in a cold and scanty meal; after grace we

waited till the head-master appeared, who would favour our dull and inattentive ears with their third sermon for the day. Immediately upon the close of his sermon, we left for the sleeping-wards ; but on reaching them, we had still another service to go through. One of our monitors would read us a chapter from the Bible, and a regular set of evening prayers ; and we appropriately closed the Sunday with a singing of the Burial Anthem !

“Heaven only knows who was the wag that ordained this opportune finale. The oddity was that while our psalmody was in general carefully attended to by an organist of the highest ability, the air of the Burial Anthem had been handed down by merely oral tradition. Each ward had consequently a variation of its own. That of my own ward was more desultory, fitful and melancholy than the howling of an out-of-door's dog upon a moonlit night. It seemed always to chime in with my own Sunday-evening feelings of blank, cold, hungry, church-wearied, sermon-stunned, Xenophon-dreading, for ever and for everish despair. I have heard a great deal said in my time of the religious education of children and boys. I, at all events, have no reason to complain. I had as much of religious instruction squandered on myself as, if judiciously distributed, would have turned a whole regiment of dragoons into missionaries.”

It was enough to make most boys hate the very name of religion all the rest of their lives. We may be right thankful that the spirit of the times has taught us other ways of making Sunday a holy day for young people. In Charles Lamb's time, things were more likely to be worse than better ; and yet we find him insisting upon it that the Christ's Hospital boy is notably a religious character. It was religion with a strong tinge of superstition ; a tendency to unenlightened faith rather than to good works, which were rather connected with the law of the rod. Strange fancies and traditions of the past could not but linger in such a place. A boy leaving his ward at night to borrow a book from one of the neighbouring ones, would scurry across the passages as if they had been the walks of a lonely churchyard. D'Arcy Thompson tells us how at Hertford the muttered repetition of the word *Trinity* was supposed to be a charm against all peril, so that a big fellow called to answer for himself before the master passed the word that everybody was to say this sacred word of power for him as

fast as possible. There were legends also of boys borne away by the Evil One for such a sin as saying one's prayers backwards. Leigh Hunt mentions an epidemic dread among the boys of a mysterious personage known as the Fazzer, whose nature "consisted in being audacious, unknown, and frightening boys at night, sometimes by pulling them out of their beds, sometimes by simply *fazzing* their hair (*fazzing* meant pulling or vexing like a goblin), sometimes by quietly giving us to understand that the 'Fazzer was out,' that is to say, out of his own bed, and then being seen, by those who dared to look, sitting or otherwise making his appearance in his white shirt, motionless and dumb." Strong spirits knew well that this Fazzer was only a boy like themselves in trumpery disguise; but the small and timid ones could not master a creepy sensation at the very name of him. A similar hobgoblin plays much the same part in African villages: the superstitions of schoolboys and savages are much alike.

The tyranny of credulity and of custom, that fetter of ignorant natures all the world over, was answerable for much of what Lamb claims as a peculiarly tender and apprehensive sense of right and wrong in his schoolfellows. Hence the origin of some of those observances and prohibitions with which, as he notes, their religious sense was "apt to impose a yoke upon itself beyond the strict obligations of the moral law." Is he not quizzing us in treating certain strange notions of theirs so seriously? Ill-fed as they were, these boys kept themselves to a voluntary abstinence from certain parts of their diet. Thus in later times a kind of puddings, not bad in themselves, were rigidly held as unclean; the hungry eyes of little boys might water, but they durst not offend against public opinion by touching a morsel of the tabooed dainty. Lamb tells us how a sort of sweet cakes were refused with equal sternness of principle. The prejudice against fat is more intelligible, though not the "Judaic rigour" with which it was absolutely interdicted by the boys' unwritten law. Lamb has a famous story of this semi-superstitious hatred of fat, called *gag* in the blue-coat slang.

"A *gag-eater* in our time was equivalent to a *goule*, and held in equal detestation. — suffered under the imputation :

"——— 'Twas said,
He ate strange flesh."

He was observed, after dinner, carefully to gather up the remnants left at his table (not many, nor very choice fragments you may credit me)—and, in an especial manner, these disreputable morsels, which he would convey away, and secretly stow in the settle that stood at his bedside. None saw when he ate them. It was rumoured that he privately devoured them in the night. He was watched, but no traces of such midnight practices were discoverable. Some reported that, on leave-days, he had been seen to carry out of the bounds a large blue check handkerchief, full of something. This then must be the accursed thing. Conjecture next was at work to imagine how he could dispose of it. Some said he sold it to the beggars. This belief generally prevailed. He went about moping. None spake to him. No one would play with him. He was excommunicated; put out of the pale of the school. He was too powerful a boy to be beaten, but he underwent every mode of that negative punishment, which is more grievous than many stripes. Still he persevered. At length he was observed by two of his schoolfellows, who were determined to get at the secret, and had traced him one leave-day for that purpose, to enter a large worn-out building, such as there exist specimens of in Chancery Lane, which are let out to various scales of pauperism, with open door and a common staircase. After him they silently slunk in, and followed by stealth up four flights, and saw him tap at a poor wicket, which was opened by an aged woman, meanly clad. Suspicion was now ripened into certainty. The informers had secured their victim. They had him in their toils. Accusation was formally preferred, and retribution most signal was looked for. Mr. Hathaway, the then steward (for this happened a little after my time), with that patient sagacity which tempered all his conduct, determined to investigate the matter before he proceeded to sentence. The result was, that the supposed mendicants, the receivers or purchasers of the mysterious scraps, turned out to be the parents of —, an honest couple come to decay—whom this seasonable supply had, in all probability, saved from mendicancy; and this young stork, at the expense of his own good name, had all this while been only feeding the old birds! The governors on this occasion, much to their honour, voted a present relief to the family of —, and presented him with a silver medal. The lesson which the steward read upon RASH

JUDGMENT, on the occasion of publicly delivering the medal to —, I believe would not be lost upon his auditory. I had left school then, but I well remember —. He was a tall, shambling youth, with a cast in his eye, not at all calculated to conciliate hostile prejudices. I have since seen him carrying a baker's basket. I think I heard he did not do quite so well by himself, as he had done by the old folks."

With what Lamb calls "this leaning towards over-belief in matters of religion," he classes a special turn for romance among the Blue-Coats, to be traced in the same manner to "their excess of society with each other, and defect of mingling with the world. Hence the peculiar avidity with which such books as the 'Arabian Nights' Entertainments' and others of a still wilder cast are, or at least were in my time, sought for by the boys." He has told us how they read such books in season and out of season, and he remembers that half a dozen of them once set off from school without map, card, or compass, on a serious expedition to discover *Philip Quarll's Island*. How many youngsters of our generation have any curiosity about Philip Quarll and his Island, or could even pass a respectable examination in the "Arabian Nights?" Perhaps Charles Lamb is attributing to the mass of his schoolfellows a love of reading which was more marked in himself and his congenial cronies. We can well believe that he pored over romantic stories. Here is an account of an expedition of his own, modelled upon the travels of Bruce, who was in his day what Livingstone, Stanley, and Baker are in ours.

"Fired with a perusal of the Abyssinian Pilgrim's exploratory ramblings after the cradle of the infant Nilus, we well remember on one fine summer holiday (a "whole day's leave" we called it at Christ's Hospital) sallying forth at rise of sun, not very well provisioned either for such an undertaking, to trace the current of the New River—Middletonian stream!—to its scaturient source, as we had read, in meadows by fair Amwell. Gallantly did we commence our solitary quest—for it was essential to the dignity of a DISCOVERY, that no eye of school-boy, save our own, should beam on the detection. By flowery spots, and verdant lanes skirting Hornsey, Hope trained us on in many a baffling turn; endless, hopeless meanders, as it seemed; or as if the jealous waters had dodged us, reluctant to have the humble spot of their nativity revealed; till spent,



THE HALL OF CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

and nigh famished, before set of the same sun, we sate down somewhere by Bowes Farm near Tottenham, with a tithe of our proposed labours only yet accomplished ; sorely convinced in spirit, that that Brucian enterprise was as yet too arduous for our young shoulders."

In the matter of games, too, the Blue-Coat boy was peculiarly situated, standing in more ways than one at a disadvantage. Those of us who have seen how he can tuck up his long skirts and scurry about his hard playground, will not reproach him with that want of activity whereof, on first appearances, he might be suspected ; but it must be confessed that he has little enough room for his energy in the heart of London, the great argument for removing his school further a-field.

Now, these youngsters have a cricket-ground at Dulwich, where their yellow legs may be seen cheerfully dotting the grass like animated butter-cups, any fine Saturday afternoon ; there is also a good gymnasium, a swimming bath, and a rowing-club. Then, they had only their three playgrounds to disport themselves in—the Hall playground, the "Ditch," where ran one of the old town ditches turned into a sewer, and the "Garden" of the monastery which once occupied this site. Pavement and gravel make not the best arena for most boy's games ; though London working boys may be seen spending the fag-end of their dinner-hour at play in the crowded streets of the city, supremely careless of cabs and vans and the hurrying throng of business men. Old public-school men in passing Christ's Hospital have been shocked by the sight of its cloistered inmates strolling about in mere idle talk, or shaming not to amuse themselves with tops and marbles long after these trivial joys had become disreputable among boys of any pretension ; yet the "young monks" were always ready enough to play at hockey, prisoners' base, leap-frog, baste the bear, and the like, in their season, entering into them with all the more zest, we learn, if they happened to be prohibited as dangerous.

They had rough games of their own, too, in which, as often happens, the small boys got most of the hard knocks, and the big ones most of the fun. One of the games said to be peculiar to Blue-Coat boys, is called "Good Books," and is played by a party of five in the following manner : "Five pieces of paper of exactly the same size and appearance are procured, and on each is written one or other of these words—

Rex, Judex, Opifex, Fur, and Castigator ; they are then carefully folded so as to prevent the possibility of guessing what is written. The five pieces of paper are at a given signal thrown into the air, and each boy seizes one. The lucky holder of Rex (the king) calls forth Judex (the judge) to give instructions to Opifex (the watchman) to seize Fur (the thief), who is condemned by the judge to receive so many strokes across the hand, administered by Castigator (the flogger). Collusion in this game is sometimes practised, and then woe-betide the unfortunate holder of Fur. Could the origin of this game be traced, no doubt it would be very curious."

The drawing lots for characters may be an invention among the Blues ; but of course young people have always been used to playing at justice and other proceedings of their elders. Cases in point are those of the children playing at being *cadi*, as seen by the Caliph in the Arabian Nights' Story of Ali Cogia, and of Cyrus, chosen a king in sport by his playfellows, ordering a nobleman's son to be scourged for disobeying his orders, as will be remembered by schoolboys who have got the length of Herodotus. In the Apocryphal Gospel of the Infancy, Jesus Christ is represented as acting a somewhat similar part among other children.

The different wards, it seems, preferred to play separately, unless when two of them met for a bout at that great game which kings and soldiers love to play at. Fighting was a frequent relief to the monotony of school life, not only the private duel between individuals, but also formally declared wars on occasions of public quarrel. The neighbouring wards were as jealous of their honour as two rival empires, and sometimes would come to dire battle with such weapons as night-caps stuffed with sawdust, twisted handkerchiefs, knotted girdles, pieces of rope, bolsters, and so on ; outposts being duly set before the fray began, not on account of the enemy, but to keep watch for the beadles. As usual, such disputes would arise from some small enough matter : a boy belonging to one ward would have intruded into another ; there might be a question of precedence in descending to the lavatory. But often, perhaps, the *casus belli* would serve as a mere excuse to vent feeling that had been long gathering to a head.

Charles Lamb says nothing about fighting ; such rude sports would be little in harmony with his nature : but other writers

let us know how the Blue-Coat was always a most pugnacious fellow, for all his monastic looks. In a volume of more modern and most amusing reminiscences, which are so good, that leave must be begged for another extract, we learn that mimic warfare was the all-engrossing, if not very appropriate, game of Christmas-tide. "Each ward of fifty," says D'Arcy Thompson, "would be divided into two bands, either sailors and soldiers, or pirates and sailors, the former side in each division being the favourite one of the select few. We had all to practise for weeks previously; our coats would be tucked up tight to the waist, displaying our knee-breeches and our laughable yellow legs; the breast of our coat or gown would be thrown open to display a paper-painted mimic shirt with blue or red stripes; the soldier would wear a gorgeous pasteboard helmet; the sailor and pirate would have respectively his blue and red worsted nightcap; every man would have his wooden sword and shield; but the soldier's device might be a griffin or a red cross, while that of the pirates, who were always the favourite, was invariably a skull and a pair of crossed bones."

So far this was mere fancy work; but sometimes on a dark winter evening, when the various bands were marching through the grounds, singing their martial anthems, and shouting defiance at one another, they would mingle together in spite of the beadies on watch to prevent a collision, and carried away by excitement, would rush into real combat. Then "there would be charging, and slashing, and hammering on head and shoulder and shield and cowed back, as in the olden days before and round windy Ilium. And we left our wounded on the field; for alas! I have seen again and again the beadies carry off unfortunates senseless to the infirmary."

It is hardly necessary to say that Christ's Hospital had a language as well as customs of its own, a code of school slang, with a special *patois* belonging to the Hertford Branch, containing many words by no means to be found in Johnson's Dictionary, the origin of some of them buried in the darkness of antiquity, while others are apparently due to the ingenuity of youthful scholarship, or are mere survivals of archaic English. When we remember how plastic language still is in the mouths of boys, and how these boys were shut up, "so near and yet so far," from the busy world around their cloisters, we shall expect to find an unusually rich vocabulary belonging to the place,

which, however, we may pass over without examination, as any of us to whom it is to be of use, either know, have known, or will know in good time that *acle* means "red," *bunkey*, "awkward," *cake*, "to cane," *crug*, "bread," and so on. Yet to the learned a book on the subject of school slang in general would not be without interest and instruction; and it were to be wished that some comparative philologist might take the matter in hand. Authors are so hard up for subjects nowadays that this hint is not one to be despised.

Another peculiarity of Christ's Hospital used to be in its "housey" money, as distinguished from that current among mere citizens in town and country. The coin of the realm was here no legal tender. Any boy so fortunate as to get a "tip" must forthwith change it into dingy octagonal pieces which alone passed within the walls of the hospital, and, of course, passed nowhere else; but this was of the less consequence, as commercial dealings with the outside world were strictly prohibited, boys being expected to make all purchases from a licensed purveyor within the walls. The principles of free trade, however, did not fail to be vindicated by enterprising youngsters who would run the blockadé and "sneak out;" and those returning from a day's leave often took the opportunity of smuggling in a small venture, just as many of their elders in that day were occupied in cheating the revenue officers on a larger scale. Commerce seems to have flourished in these City cloisters; some of the boys prepared themselves betimes for a mercantile life by practising the arts of exchange and barter, known here as "chaffing." We have seen how a boy would put up his dinner to auction, with delivery at a date some weeks distant. Money was lent at high interest, and goods sold on credit or otherwise at fancy prices, the young salesman not disdaining a profit of cent. per cent. Raisins, for instance, are mentioned in two or three separate works as selling at the fixed price of thirty a penny. D'Arcy Thompson declares that in his day the writing school was a "pen and ink fair," where "idlers by the dozen would be walking in amongst the desks, pretending to make pens, serve out ink, or borrow knives, but in reality proclaiming lotteries, catering for prick-books, selling at outrageous profits almonds, raisins, toffy, sausages, saveloys, and slices of roley-poley pudding." We cannot fancy Charles Lamb taking much part in such transac-

tions, even though his features had a Jewish look. Jews, by the way, are perhaps no sharper than their Christian competitors; and old Shylock himself could not have been a keener hand at usury than some of these Blue-Coat boys.

As a set off against its not too luxurious mode of life, Christ's Hospital enjoys sundry distinctions and privileges of high antiquity, the right, for instance, of addressing the sovereign on occasion of a royal visit to the City. A right more appreciated by the boys was that of free admission to the Tower, which Charles Lamb and his schoolfellows did not fail to avail themselves of when they had no other way of spending a holiday. There were lions in the Tower in these days. "We were in the habit of making up parties, on leave days, to visit the interior of this interesting fortress. The menagerie, which has been for some years closed, was, of course, the most attractive to our youthful tastes. Many an agreeable hour have I passed in watching the habits of the animals, playing with the monkeys and listening to the remarks of the visitors. Then again the jewel office was a grand sight for a boy. Only think of being within a few feet of the Crown jewels!"

Another curious thing has to be mentioned in connection with Christ's Hospital. The State lotteries, abolished only in the early part of this century, were drawn by Blue-Coat boys. There are recorded several attempts on the part of unscrupulous gamblers to bribe these young officials, who must have found it hard to resist temptation. Latterly, to prevent all trickery, the rule was that twelve boys should be nominated to this employment, not till the morning of the day on which the lottery was drawn. Then from the twelve two were picked out at random to draw tickets from the wheels; but first they had to be examined to see that the breasts and sleeves of their coats were closely buttoned and their pockets sewn up, and while on duty they were obliged to keep the left hand in their girdle behind them, and the right hand open with fingers extended. A strange satire it seems that urchins enjoying so little of the world's good things, for their own part, should be set to deal out the favours of blind Fortune.

Then there were the show suppers on the Sunday evenings of Lent, "our stately supplings in public, where the well-lighted hall, and the confluence of well-dressed company who came to see us, made the whole look more like a concert or assembly

than a scene of a plain bread and cheese collation." The Lord Mayor, the sheriffs, and other high personages, often figured as spectators, among a crowd of other visitors, many of them old Blues, pleased thus to view from a different standpoint the stage of their youthful joys and sorrows. A pleasant sight this still is for any man, whether bred in these cloisters or not, so long as he be not too crabbed to see

" With undelighted heart
So many happy youths, so wide and fair
A congregation in its budding time
Of health and hope and beauty, all at once
So many divers samples from the growth
Of life's sweet season."

After prayers and supper the boys sang an anthem; then was enacted the ceremony of "bowing round." The various wards, headed by their nurses and monitors, formed themselves into ranks, and marched past to music two and two, bowing before the Lord Mayor or whoever happened to occupy the chair. A quaint look was given to this procession by the boys carrying the ensigns of their respective "trades," the bread-basket, the tablecloth, the beer-can, the salt-box, the candlesticks, and so on. This bowing round took a long time to perform with due solemnity, having been probably the subject of a careful rehearsal on Saturday night, when a poker or an empty chair would be made to play the part of the presiding dignitary.

Another ceremony duly commemorated by Charles Lamb was that of the annual speeches on St. Matthew's Day, when every Grecian had to deliver himself in a classical oration, the main subject being the praise of King Edward VI., and of all former scholars who had done honour to the school. These speeches were apt to be rather tedious to the mass of the boys, but the general company would be much impressed by the learning of the young Ciceros, and had an opportunity of going beyond mere barren admiration in the expression of their feelings, for in conclusion, the Grecians handed round a glove to collect donations for those of their number about to proceed to the universities, and a handsome sum would thus be collected among the visitors. If this begging custom be thought unworthy of such an institution, let it be remembered that a similar practice existed at Eton, the proudest of all our public schools; and we have already seen from the life of Thomas

Platter how close a connection there once was between learning and beggary.

To each boy the day would come at last when, first for many years, he put on the garments of ordinary life, and, with a hat on his head, went out into the streets, dazed and awkward in his unfamiliar guise, a Blue-Coat boy no longer. Strange, and not always cheerful, must have been the feelings of such a one. Ill-fed, ill-used, and ill-educated as these boys had been, many of them could look back on their Christ's Hospital days as the bright time of their lives, such is the power of boyhood "to make a happiness it does not find," and such the nature of manhood to magnify the pleasures of the past. All the famous authors of that generation who came out of the Newgate Street cloisters remained on the whole loyal to their mingled memories. Leigh Hunt wept bitterly on leaving the place. Coleridge expressed his gratitude that he had been flogged and not flattered there. Charles Lamb has always a kindly word for his old school. It is just those finely strung natures who often suffer at school more than their fellows, for whom yet the gracious season of youth has its warmest glow and leaves the sweetest illusions lingering throughout life. Even the melancholy Cowper's heart had a tender place for the "old boy" sentiment.

"Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise,
We love the play-place of our early days ;
The scene is touching, and the heart is stone,
That feels not at that sight, and feels at none.
The wall on which we tried our graving skill,
The very name we carved subsisting still ;
The bench on which we sat while deep employed,
Though mangled, hack'd, and hew'd, not yet destroyed ;
The little ones, unbuttoned, glowing hot,
Playing our games, and on the very spot ;
As happy as we once, to kneel and draw
The chalky ring, and knuckle down at taw ;
To pitch the ball into the grounded hat,
Or drive it devious with a dexterous pat :
The pleasing spectacle at once excites
Such recollection of our own delights,
That, viewing it, we seem almost to obtain
Our innocent, sweet simple years again."

III.

CHARLES LAMB left school in his fifteenth year with a taste for scholarship rather than with any very useful stock of the same, and in point of general knowledge remained all his life "a whole Encyclopædia behind the rest of the world," as he puts it, no doubt taking a humourist's license to exaggerate his ignorance, for he certainly knew enough Latin to write comical letters to his friends in that language, which is more than most public-school boys can do in after-life.

"I should have scarcely cut a figure among the franklins, or country gentlemen, in King John's days. I know less geography than a schoolboy of six weeks' standing. To me a map of old Ortelius is as authentic as Arrowsmith. I do not know whereabouts Africa merges into Asia; whether Ethiopia lie in one or other of those great divisions; nor can form the remotest conjecture of the position of New South Wales, or Van Diemen's Land. . . . I have no astronomy. I do not know where to look for the Bear, or Charles's Wain; the place of any star; or the name of any of them at sight. I guess at Venus only by her brightness—and if the sun on some portentous morn were to make his first appearance in the west, I verily believe that, while all the world were gasping in apprehension about me, I alone should stand unterrified, from sheer incuriosity and want of observation. Of history and chronology I possess some vague points, such as one cannot help picking up in the course of miscellaneous study; but I never deliberately sat down to a chronicle, even of my own country. I have most dim apprehensions of the four great monarchies; and sometimes the Assyrian, sometimes the Persian, floats as *first*, in my fancy. I make the widest conjectures concerning Egypt, and her shepherd kings. My friend M——, with great painstaking, got me to think I understood the first proposition in Euclid, but gave me over in despair at the second. I am entirely unacquainted with the modern languages; and, like a better man than myself, have 'small Latin and less Greek.' . . . There is nothing which I dread so much as the being left alone for a quarter of an hour with a sensible, well-informed man, that does not know me."

As an example of this affected dread of well-informed men,

we have the often-told tale of Lamb's travelling in a stage-coach with such a person. "For twenty miles we discoursed about the properties of steam, probabilities of carriage by ditto, till all my science and more than all was exhausted, and I was thinking of escaping my tormentor by getting up on the outside, when, getting into Bishop's Stortford, my gentleman, spying some farming land, put an unlucky question to me: 'What sort of a crop of turnips I thought we should have this year?' Emma's eyes turned to me to know what in the world I could have to say; and she burst out into a violent fit of laughter, maugre her pale serious cheeks, when, with the greatest gravity, I replied that '*it depended, I believed, on the boiled legs of mutton*.' This clenched our conversation, and my gentleman, with a face half-wise, half in scorn, troubled us with no more conversation, scientific or philosophical, for the remainder of the journey."

In the same whimsical tone he expresses a horror of the new kind of schoolmaster, the man who was expected to know and to teach a little of everything. Education was far differently understood in the grammar-school of Christ's Hospital. The whole course there had been designed to prepare boys for a university career, to which few of them could attain. The large majority left school just as they had a chance of seeing daylight through the forest of cases and moods and rules of gender and syntax in which they had wandered so many years, and before beginning to reap any agreeable fruit of so much parsing and puzzling and construing. For such boys their long sum of school hours had come to this: patches of attention and reluctant industry, chequered with broad streaks of bewilderment or trembling fear upon a groundwork of dull inactivity in which neither honest work nor hearty play was possible. It is all very well for Charles Lamb to admire this state of things, in which he could read romances on the sly and come off not very ill with an occasional bout of application to dictionary and grammar: scholars like him seem able, indeed, to gather the honey that suits them from every flower, nay, even from weeds; but nine boys out of ten might have more profitably spent half their wasted time out of doors and the other half in learning something to be of use to them otherwise than by being forgotten, as would happen soon enough to their smattering of classical lore. The welfare of these boys was little taken

into consideration. The school had to be judged by the cream of it, the Grecians, whose fortune was to rise to the top and in due time come to the University churn; but all this would be at the expense of the skim-milk thrown away into business-life. Of all persons in the world, a pun is recorded of Boyer, the Christ's Hospital tyrant—for pedantic jests had he, not many nor rich—a pun that has more point in it than he knew: “Ass *in presenti* seldom makes a wise man *in futuro*!”

But Elia's heart was always with the past, and he had no turn for the practical. After passing through the hands of Boyer, he can yet treat the time-honoured traditions of education in a strain of cheerful optimism which is only half waggery:

“Rest to the souls of those fine old Pedagogues; the breed, long since extinct, of the Lilys and the Linacres: who, believing that all learning was contained in the languages which they taught, and despising every other acquirement as superficial and useless, came to their task as to a sport! Passing from infancy to age, they dreamed away all their days as in a grammar-school. Revolving in a perpetual cycle of declensions, conjugations, syntaxes, and prosodies; renewing constantly the occupations which had charmed their studious childhood; rehearsing continually the part of the past; life must have slipped from them at last like one day. They were always in their first garden, reaping harvests of their golden time, among their *Flori* and their *Spici-legia*; in Arcadia still, but kings! the ferule of their sway not much harsher, but of like dignity with that mild sceptre attributed to King Basileus; the Greek and Latin, their stately Pamela and their Philoclea; with the occasional duncery of some untoward tyro, serving for a refreshing interlude of a Mopsa or a clown Damocetas!”

To which poor Damocetas might well remark for his part, as he does in Virgil:

“*Idem amor exitium pecori (if not) pecorisque magistro!*”

Charles Lamb's stutter stood in the way of his going on to Grecianship; perhaps, too, the *res angusta domi* required him to set about earning his living without delay. None of his schoolfellows would have more enjoyed or profited by a University course. But the fates were adverse; he had to content himself with the pleasures of imagination, through which he was able, when visiting Oxford or Cambridge, to feel more at

home than many unworthy members of these venerable abodes of learning.

"I can here play the gentleman, enact the student. To such a one as myself, who has been defrauded in his young years of the sweet food of academic institution, nowhere is so pleasant, to while away a few idle weeks at, as one or other of the Universities. Their vacation, too, at this time of the year, falls in so pat with *ours*. Here I can take my walks unmolested, and fancy myself of what degree or standing I please. I seem admitted *ad eundem*. I fetch up past opportunities. I can rise at the chapel-bell, and dream that it rings for *me*. In moods of humility I can be a Sizar, or a Servitor. When the peacock vein rises I strut a Gentleman Commoner. In graver moments I proceed Master of Arts. Indeed, I do not think I am much unlike that respectable character. I have seen your dim-eyed vergers and bed-makers in spectacles drop a bow or a curtsy as I pass, wisely mistaking me for something of the sort. I go about in black, which favours the notion. Only in Christ Church reverend quadrangle, I can be content to pass for nothing short of a Seraphic Doctor.

"The walks at these times are so much one's own,—the tall trees of Christ's, the groves of Magdalen! The halls deserted, and with open doors inviting one to slip in unperceived, and pay a devoir to some founder or noble or royal benefactress (that should have been ours), whose portrait seems to smile upon their overlooked beadsman, and to adopt me for their own. Then, to take a peep in by the way at the butteries, and sculleries, redolent of antique hospitality: the immense caves of kitchens, kitchen fire-places, cordial recesses; ovens whose first pies were baked four centuries ago; and spits which have cooked for Chaucer!"

In such kindly spirit could he give himself up to dreams of "what might have been." A less congenial career had lain open to him, in which, however, it was still his fortune, as in the Temple and in Christ's Hospital, to be conversant with those monuments of the past that were so fit to cradle his peculiar genius. The scene of this boy's first entrance upon life was the South Sea House, "a melancholy-looking, handsome brick and stone edifice to the left where Threadneedle Street abuts upon Bishopsgate," which would long have been forgotten, but for his description of it.

"This was once a house of trade—a centre of busy interests. The throng of merchants was here—the quick pulse of gain—and here some forms of business are still kept up, though the soul be long since fled. Here are still to be seen stately porticos ; imposing staircases, offices roomy as the state apartments in palaces—deserted, or thinly peopled with a few straggling clerks ; the still more sacred interiors of court and committee-rooms, with venerable faces of beadles, door-keepers—directors seated in form on solemn days (to proclaim a dead dividend), at long worm-eaten tables, that have been mahogany, with tarnished gilt-leather coverings, supporting massy silver inkstands long since dry ; the oaken wainscots hung with pictures of deceased governors and sub-governors, of Queen Anne, and the two first monarchs of the Brunswick dynasty ; huge charts, which subsequent discoveries have antiquated ; dusty maps of Mexico, dim as dreams—and soundings of the Bay of Panama ! The long passages hung with buckets, appended, in idle row, to walls, whose substance might defy any, short of the last, conflagration :—with vast ranges of cellarage under all, where dollars and pieces-of-eight once lay, an 'unsunned heap,' for Mammon to have solaced his solitary heart withal—long since dissipated, or scattered into air at the blast of the breaking of that famous bubble. Such is the South-Sea House. At least, such it was forty years ago, when I knew it—a magnificent relic !"

In this old-world house of business, he got an appointment not long after leaving school. Of his apprenticeship there to commercial life we know little, beyond that it lasted only a year or two. Then he became a clerk in the East India House, and continued in this employment for thirty-three years. Boys who are always fretting to leave school for the sake of change, or in hopes of having an easier time, should know what Charles Lamb thought of it. "Melancholy was the transition, at fourteen, from the abundant playtime and the frequently intervening vacations of school-days, to the eight, nine, and sometimes ten hours a day attendance at the counting-house. But time partially reconciles us to anything. I gradually became content—doggedly contented, as wild animals in cages." Leigh Hunt tells us how at this time he would come to visit his old school, as if well pleased there "to linger, a glad votary." One might have thought that any wight once escaped from Boyer's

clutches, would not lightly have trusted himself near the haunts of that monster.

Many youths at the awkward age between boy and man, "too ripe for play, too raw for conversation," are ashamed of having been undisguised boys so recently, and rather affect to shun all that may remind them of school-life; but it was not so with Charles Lamb. Without any maudlin sentimentality about it, he kept a sound hearty interest in young people, which he even extended to the little chimney-sweepers who were the laughing-stock of other boys. Readers of "Elia" must remember the suppers which he assisted his schoolfellow, Jem White, in giving to those ill-used "Africans of our own growth—these almost clergy imps who sport their cloth without assumption; and from their little pulpits, the tops of chimneys, in the nipping air of a December morning, preach a lesson of patience to mankind." His chief friends from first to last, too, were his old schoolfellows. The saddest note in all his writings is that verse—

"I have had playmates, I have had companions
In the days of my childhood, in my joyful schooldays—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces!"

If they had but known how many friends this "gentle-hearted Charles" was to make for himself in the world, would not these early associates have preserved for us the slightest memorials of his youth!

We catch scanty glimpses of him till 1796, when, at the age of twenty, he first appears as an author—a year marked for him, too, by the terrible tragedy which was to cast its shadow over all the rest of his life. The family had moved into lodgings, his mother being by this time an invalid, and his father sinking into dotage. His elder sister Mary, "my poor dear, dearest sister," who had been a second mother to Charles, helped to support the household by needlework. One day a sudden fit of madness came upon her; she snatched up a knife to strike a young girl who was working with her, chased her round the room, and, when Mrs. Lamb would have interfered, stabbed her own mother to the heart. In her fury she also inflicted a slight wound upon her imbecile father, before Charles could succeed in mastering the maniac. The full horror and

misery of this calamity fell upon him. The father's wits were so far gone that he had to be kept quiet by a game of cribbage, as if nothing had happened, while the coroner's inquest was sitting over the way ; he died a few months later. The elder brother, John, now comparatively well off, showed no readiness to come forward and bear his share of the family burdens. It was Charles, a poor clerk, who, to save his sister from Bedlam, undertook the charge of her, and to this sad duty nobly devoted himself for the rest of his life.

Such an experience was one to turn a youth's head white. It goes far to account for the melancholy vein running throughout Lamb's humour, which, however, is but the other side of that boisterousness of fancy, those outbursts of wilful mirth, those sallies of sportive wit, in which his mind sought relief from the gloomy reality of his lot. As he had been old beyond his childish years, so in turn did his heart grow young when he came to look back lovingly on these days of early happiness. "He had a general aversion," he says of himself as Elia, "from being treated like a grave or respectable character, and kept a wary eye upon the advances of age that should so entitle him. He herded always, while it was possible, with people younger than himself. He did not conform to the march of time, but was dragged along in the procession. His manners lagged behind his years. He was too much of the boy-man. The *toga virilis* never sat gracefully on his shoulders."

Thus it is, perhaps, that few writers have lingered upon their boyhood with more affection and sympathy. Boys can't understand how some men, especially the kind of men likely to write books, find such a charm in the days of youth, which for them are passing by so prosaically. *They* are eager to be men ; they see little pleasant in boyhood beyond the chance of growing out of it. "No sense have they of ills to come," but, dazzled by hope, look forward blindly, as ignorant of the withering stress of life's noon, as men are forgetful of the clouds that often darkened its bright morning. Yet must not they know best who have known both youth and manhood ? our error, if it be an error, should have less delusion in it. Some day the impatient lad, fretting now under the yoke of wholesome discipline, may learn to look back on his school-days, tasks, punishments, and all, with something of the same kindliness that Charles Lamb had for their memory—perhaps to feel the change of

time like that kindred spirit of his, the tender-hearted jester
who sang the Song of the Shirt—

- “ *Our* tops are spun with coils of care,
Our dumps are no delight !
The Elgin marbles are but tame,
And 'tis at best a sorry game
To fly the Muse's kite.
- “ Our hearts are dough, our heels are lead,
Our topmost joys fall dull and dead,
Like balls with no rebound !
And often with a faded eye
We look behind and send a sigh
Towards that merry ground !
- “ Then be contented. Thou hast got
The most of heaven in thy young lot ;
There's sky-blue in thy cup !
Thou'lt find thy manhood all too fast—
Soon come, soon gone ! and age at last,
A sorry *breaking up* !”





A STABLE-BOY.

I.



HERE are many books nowadays in praise of lowly men who have contrived to "burst their birth's invidious bar," and raise themselves by their own honest efforts to high positions of honour and usefulness : an excellent example for youth, though, as we can't all be at the top, and some of us are more in place near the bottom, it would be well for us also not to forget the good old Catechism lesson of doing our duty in that station of life in which we happen to find ourselves. Most interesting and instructive are such records of self-helped men, most pathetic the tales which less often get into print, of those who have made the same struggle, only to fail.

"Chill penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul."

Among the heroes of history of success against difficulties, few better deserve to figure than Thomas Holcroft, a name well known to our grandfathers, though now somewhat shouldered out of sight among the crowd of new candidates for fame. He at one time seemed likely to attain distinction no otherwise than as a stable-boy or jockey, a vocation that has not often proved the road to any degree of honour outside of the sporting world—though, by the way, there was one Yorkshire groom who went abroad, rose to be a foreign minister of state, and in the end ruled men instead of horses. The

life of "Baron Ward," known in the recent annals of Parma and Lucca, had this beginning.

Thomas Holcroft was born in 1745. His parents were humble folks, living in Orange Court, Leicester Fields, before which the National Gallery now stands, looking over Trafalgar Square, the very heart of London, where her grandeur and her poverty come into closest contact. He has a faint recollection that his mother "dealt in greens and oysters." His father was for the nonce a shoemaker, not a regular apprenticed shoemaker, but one who had taken up this trade among others, and does not seem to have made much of it. The elder Holcroft, it is confessed, was of an unsteady, adventurous nature, which did not allow him, though a sober and apparently not unintelligent man, to settle himself long in any occupation. The great man of the family was Uncle John, nothing less than groom in the King's stables, where his brother had also been employed for a time as helper, but could not keep his place. Thomas's father, however, retained a taste for horseflesh, and was even a dealer in a small way, or rather, it would appear, he kept horses for hire which, if his word might be taken for it, were matchless steeds, though the hirers may not have had the same opinion of them. He sought betimes to teach his son the rudiments of the equestrian craft. The child, his petticoats being discarded for the occasion, would be strapped on to a spirited pony, and taken out to ride with his father, who held the pony with a leading-rein, to the great amusement of their neighbours.

Another whim of his father, who seems to have been rather an original character, was having Thomas taught the fiddle. At the age of five or six he was reputed quite a prodigy on this instrument; but Uncle John's respectability was outraged by the idea of any nephew of his turning out a fiddler, and the lessons were stopped. He also went to a school in the neighbourhood where children were sent rather to keep them out of the way than to learn anything. One of his earliest reminiscences is being severely whipped for crying to go to school! The boy, who had little enough schooling, was father to the man in this precocious desire for instruction.

So far the family had lived in tolerable comfort; but when Thomas was six years old, there came the first of a series of changes which for the most part meant misfortunes. For some

reason or other, his father moved to a house beyond Ascot Heath, about thirty miles from London. What his business here was remains a mystery. Thomas only knows that he often used to walk to and from London in one day. He had a horse still, a tall, raw-boned hack, on the bare back of which our little boy was made to gallop down a hill near their house, that he might learn to stick on. His father also taught him to read, at which he soon made rapid progress. Eleven chapters of the Old Testament was fixed as his daily task. One day a neighbouring farmer found him sitting on the gate with his Bible in his hand, and having asked him if he could read already, was so much amazed at the way in which he got through that ordeal of young scholars, the tenth chapter of Nehemiah, with its long array of uncouth Hebrew names, that he patted the child's head, gave him a penny, and said he was an uncommon boy. Perhaps the good farmer himself could not have done as much for all the pennies in the world! His father did not fail to be proud of such a promising youngster, nor to boast of his superiority to other children, and the boy himself was not insensible to the goad of vanity; while it is as likely as not that the neighbours, to whom he was thus held up as a prodigy, voted him a forward brat, and professed to be glad that their children were not so conceited.

Here is an incident from these early years which he looks back to with some complacency when he came to write his memoirs. The father wished his son not only to seem, but to be, all that he desired him.

"One evening when it was quite dark, daylight having entirely disappeared, and the night being cloudy, he was boasting to a neighbour of my courage; and his companion seeming rather to doubt, my father replied, he would put it immediately to the proof. 'Tom,' said he, 'you must go to the house of Farmer Such-a-one' (I well remember the walk, but not the name of the person), 'and ask whether he goes to London to-morrow.' I was startled, but durst not dispute his authority—it was too great over me; besides that, my vanity to prove my valour was not a little excited: accordingly, I took my hat and immediately obeyed.

"The house I was sent to, as far as I can remember, must have been between a quarter and half a mile distance; and the road that led to it was by the side of the hedge on the left

hand of the common. However, I knew the way well enough, and proceeded ; but it was with many stops, starts, and fears. It may be proper to observe here, that although I could not have been without courage, yet I was really, when a child, exceedingly apprehensive, and full of superstition. When I saw magpies, it denoted good or ill luck, according as they did or did not cross me. When walking, I pored for pins, or rusty nails, which, if they lay in certain directions, foreboded some misfortune. Many such whims possessed my brain ; I was therefore not at all free from notions of this kind on the present occasion. However, I went forward on my errand, humming, whistling, and looking as carefully as I could ; now and then making a false step, which helped to relieve me, for it obliged me to attend to the road. When I came to the farmhouse, I delivered my message. ‘Bless me, child,’ cried the people within, ‘have you come this dark night all alone?’ ‘Oh yes,’ I said, assuming an air of self-consequence. ‘And who sent you?’ ‘My father wanted to *know*,’ I replied equivocally. One of them then offered to take me home, but of this I would by no means admit. My whole little stock of vanity was roused, and I hastily scampered out of the house, and was hidden in the dark. My return was something, but not much less alarming than my journey thither. At last I got safely home, glad to be rid of my fears, and inwardly not a little elated with my success. ‘Did you hear or see anybody, Tom,’ said my father, ‘as you went or came back?’ ‘No,’ said I, ‘it was quite dark ; not but I thought once or twice I did hear something behind me.’ In fact, it was my father and his companion, who had followed me at a little distance.”

At the end of a year or so their Berkshire home was broken up, and the Holcroft family had again to cast about for means of livelihood. First the mother, then both father and mother became pedlars, hawking about pins and needles, tape, garters, ribbons, and the like, Thomas trotting after them as best he could. For two or three years, the whole or part of the family was almost constantly on the tramp, through the outskirts of London, through Cambridge and the isle of Ely, through the Midland counties, then through Cheshire, and as far north as Yorkshire. The father must have been as sanguine as Mr. Micawber, always “turning his attention” to some new scheme but never sticking to it. By turns he became a dealer in rags,

hardware, buckles, buttons, spoons, fruit, coals, and pottery. Their living was precarious at the best, and often they were in want. Yet this Autolycus seems to have been honest, and not insensible to the harm that his son might take from their vagrant life. Thomas continued to repeat his prayers and Catechism, and to read the Bible. Once, in some pressing pinch, the child was sent out to beg, but only once, as he tells us: "Young as I was, I had considerable readiness in making out a story, and on this day, my little inventive faculties shone forth with much brilliancy. I told one story at one house, another at another, and continued to vary my tale just as the suggestions arose: the consequence of which was, that I moved the good country people exceedingly. One called me a poor fatherless child: another exclaimed, 'What a pity! I had so much sense!' a third patted my head, and prayed God to preserve me, that I might make a good man. And most of them contributed either by scraps of meat, farthings, bread and cheese, or other homely offers, to enrich me, and send me away with my pockets loaded. I joyfully brought as much of my stores as I could carry to the place of rendezvous my parents had appointed, where I astonished them by again reciting the false tales I had so readily invented. My father, whose passions were easily moved, felt no little conflict of mind as I proceeded. I can now, in imagination, see the working of his features. 'God bless the boy! I never heard the like!' Then, turning to my mother, he exclaimed with great earnestness: 'This must not be! the poor child will become a commonplace liar! A hedge-side rogue! He will learn to pilfer! Turn a confirmed vagrant! Go on the highway when he is older, and get hanged. He shall never go on such errands again.' How fortunate for me in this respect that I had such a father!"

Of these wanderings, in the course of which he saw a great part of England, our autobiographer has naturally but a vague memory: he remembers most clearly the frequent weariness and wretchedness, the cold and hunger which oppressed his little heart too heavily to be forgotten. One scene of the panorama effacing another so quickly, it is no wonder if in after years all remained a blank to him but a few striking scenes and incidents—Peterborough Cathedral, Wisbeach Fair, the red deer in Cannock Chase, the cakes of Banbury, two Irish tramps who cheated him out of his supper in Cheshire, the fever

which laid him up at Mansfield, his going to see a man hanged at Nottingham, and so on.

Sometimes, indeed, the family made a halt in their vagabond existence. Thomas fancies that they may have returned to London for a while, and recollects a stay at Coventry, where he was much taken with the virtue, beauty, and magnanimity of Lady Godiva in the famous story, and recognised the misfortune that befell Peeping Tom as a fine mark of divine justice. Then there was a time during which they looked upon an old half-ruined house near Rugeley as their home, where the mother and the other children lived while Thomas and his father were going their rounds. This appears to have been with Holcroft a time of comparative prosperity and steadiness. He kept donkeys here, with now and then a ragged pony or a worn-out horse, which he used chiefly in hawking Staffordshire pottery about the country, as far as Warwick, Northampton, and Lincolnshire.

Thomas remembers these journeys as the most severe of all his tasks, when for weeks together he would be driving heavily-loaded donkeys over the bad highroads and still worse bye-roads of that day, the state of which in winter would hardly be credible at present. One day, before he was ten years old, as he thinks, he walked thirty miles, having to be carried on a countryman's shoulders for the last bit of the road. But the intervals spent at their poor home were no times of rest to him. He had to keep trotting backwards and forwards on all kinds of odd jobs, and was often set to work rather fit for a man than a child. When trusted to go out alone, he could not help loitering on the way, diverting himself, as observant boys will do, with idle curiosity, even though he knew and feared the consequences. His father behaved to him with a mixture of indulgent kindness and mad temper. When the boy had to be found fault with, "he used to beat me, pull my hair up by the roots, and drag me by the ears along the ground till they ran with blood." An hour afterwards, this hasty disciplinarian would break out into as passionate exclamations of fondness, alarming himself not unreasonably with the fear of some day doing his son a serious mischief, and declaring that he would a thousand times rather die.

Once more we find this roving household settled, so far as it ever could be settled, at Nottingham. There was some talk here of binding Thomas apprentice to a stocking-weaver, to

which he strongly objected, and the matter dropped. The excitement of Nottingham races came to fix his choice of career. He was his father's own son in the love of horses, which, indeed, share with ships the loyal admiration of most British boys. From the sleek coats of the racers he cast his eyes upon the hearty, well-fed, saucy stable-boys who attended them, and began to think of it as the height of ambition to fill such a post.

His father heartily entered into these aspirations ; the only fear was that they had been set too high. But why not try, at least ? Application was made to a trainer from the neighbourhood of Newmarket, who, finding our hero a light-weight, and judging him from his answers to be in other respects a likely lad, agreed to take him upon trial. Thus all at once, from a ragged, penniless vagrant, at the age of thirteen or so he became "somebody !" He would have the charge of a horse, get plenty to eat, wear a livery and earn wages. It was the boy's first rise in life, and no gentleman elected member of Parliament, no prince, perhaps, chosen Kaiser of the Holy Roman Empire, ever felt more proud of his elevation.

Taking a tender leave of his father, not without good advice on the one side, nor on the other promises of continued affection and obedience, he set out under the care of a lad named Jack Clarke, who was taking a led horse to another Newmarket trainer's stables. The first earnest of his new prospects was a lordly breakfast, plenty of cold beef, bread and cheese, with the best table-beer *ad libitum*. Thomas forthwith made sure that he had fallen upon his legs. The weather was fine all the way ; he had the riding of the led horse ; and Jack Clarke proved a most goodnatured companion, who not only did not take any advantage of him, but was at pains to warn this raw youngster of the time-honoured devices by which his stable-fellows would be sure to try and befool him. It seems that stable-boys, like schoolboys and other uncultivated communities, looked upon a newcomer as a fit object for illnatured and unsavoury tricks calculated to turn him into a laughing-stock. For instance, they would begin by persuading the greenhorn that in order to bring himself down to a suitable weight he must take a run of three or four miles, dressed in as many waistcoats as he could borrow, and on his return be covered up in stable-muck, while the rest stood by to conclude their jest by throwing pails

of cold water over him. Another of their diversions at his expense was called "hunting the owl."

"To catch the owl is to persuade a booby that there is an owl found at roost in the corner of a barn; that a ladder must be placed against a hole through which, when the persons within shall be pleased to hoot and hunt him, he must necessarily fly, as the barn-door is shut, and every other outlet closed; that the boy chosen to catch the owl must mount this ladder on the outside, and the purblind animal, they say, will fly directly into his hat. When the owl-catcher is persuaded to all this, and mounts to his post, the game begins: hallooing and absurd noises are made; the fellows within divert themselves with laughing at what is to come, and pretending to call to one another to drive the owl from this place to that; while two or three of them approach nearer and nearer to the hole, when they discharge the contents of their full tubs and pails on the head of the expecting owl-catcher, who is generally precipitated from his ladder to some soft, but not very agreeable, preparation below."

Thanks to the lessons of Jack Clarke's experience, our boy knew better than to be taken in by such tricks, rather to the wonder of his new companions, when he got among them. But he can remember little of his first place, except a grey filly which he was set to take charge of, and which nearly made an end of his jockeyship. One day, the filly being startled, he was unseated and thrown, with his foot still in the stirrup, while she plunged violently and gave him a kick in the stomach that freed him from the stirrup, but left him senseless and to all appearance dead.

Having been brought-to by bleeding and kindly nursed till he had quite recovered, he was then sent away by his master as incompetent. For a little while he found service with another groom, but here again it appeared as if he had mistaken his vocation. To the scorn and malicious merriment of the other boys, he fell from the back of a horse which had done nothing more than shake itself in the saddle. His new master soon dismissed him, and he had well-nigh lost heart altogether.

But, with his fortunes at this low ebb, he had the boldness to apply to John Watson, his friend Jack Clarke's employer, who passed for being one of the best grooms at Newmarket, and one of the kindest masters to boot, the consequence of which was, that a boy sent away from his stables could not

readily find a place elsewhere. To John Watson Thomas applied, and had the good luck to be taken on trial at four pounds a year, with board and livery. He was put first to ride a very quiet colt at the tail of the string of horses which his master trained for Captain Vernon, one of the turf magnates of the day ; but before long John Watson saw such signs of promise in the new boy as to promote him to a dun horse of more fiery temper, which he continued to take charge of through the winter.

This horse had a very tender skin, and one bad day, when they were out exercising on the Bury Hills, the wind and sleet blowing up his nostrils, lashed him into an outbreak. He started from the rank, tried to unseat his rider, to rush off at full speed, and, not being able to get his head, began to rear, snort, kick, plunge, and generally make himself troublesome. But Thomas, having foreseen the danger and prepared for it, now sat so firm and steady, that another old groom, who was riding out with John Watson, could not restrain his admiration, declaring this to be a fine lad.

"Aye, aye," replied Watson, "you will find some time or other that there are few in Newmarket that will match him."

Here was a sweet triumph—to have had the better of his fractious horse, to have been praised by his master, and before all the other boys who could see with their own eyes that he was no milksop ! He had wanted nothing more than a little practice and encouragement to make a good rider, being gifted by nature with the bow legs and protuberant knees of a jockey ; and he soon learned to hold on to a restive horse, with knee and calf strongly pressed against its side. Now he felt secure in his situation as well as his seat, and looked down with contempt upon his former self trudging wearily at the heels of a donkey. "Instead of being obliged to drag through the dirt after the most sluggish, obstinate, and despised among our animals, I was mounted on the noblest the earth contains, had him under my care, and was borne by him over hill and dale, far outstripping the wings of the wind !" says he, indulging his muse on such a pleasing theme with a little curvet of fancy.

II.

THE life of a boy at a Newmarket training-stable was pretty hard work in some respects. His tasks would be usually all

over by nine o'clock, when, having rubbed down, fed, and put his horse to bed, he could do as much for himself; but so early as half-past two in spring, or at the latest between four and five in the depth of winter, he must be stirring again to clean the manger, sift the oats for the horse's breakfast, and shake out its litter. Then the stables had to be thoroughly swept and ventilated, and a first rough toilet made for the horses, preparatory to turning out in the cold dawn for morning exercise. Then for some three or four hours

"The train
Practised their horses on the plain
By aid of leg, of hand, and rein."

This was no careless scamper, the paces, the pauses, even the gulps of water which a horse must take, all being scientifically prescribed by the head-groom. A racehorse had to be treated tenderly as an invalid. It was never allowed to trot; walking and galloping at a gradually increasing pace was the rule, and sometimes the young rider would have fallen half asleep on its back when the first gallop began. Brought home, the precious animals must be undressed, rubbed down, thoroughly cleaned, curried, dressed again, and fed. All this done, the boys were at liberty to attend to their own breakfast, and make ample amends for the long morning's fast.

From nine o'clock till four in the afternoon, they had the time pretty much to themselves for sleeping, eating, and playing. These boys, we learn, did not despise playing with marbles and tops, along with fives, chuck-farthing, and "spell and null," a somewhat obsolete game known also as "knurr and spell." But woe betide the youngster who should not turn up punctually for afternoon stables, when much the same as the morning's course of exercise was to be gone through! The machinery of stable management was always apt to be kept going by a liberal application of strap-oil; and John Watson, though a kind master, maintained good discipline. Our Thomas boasts never to have been late but once, and that, of all days in the year, when Captain Vernon, the owner of the stables, happened to be there. He never saw the groom so angry. "On such a day!" John Watson might well have exclaimed, when he had plied his ashplant about the delinquent's shoulders.

Each boy had one horse wholly in his charge, and much depended for him upon its temper and habits, which he must

study closely. Blood horses, as our hero tells us, are apt to have marked characters of their own, like men and boys, within the broad outlines of their common equinity.

"The majority of them are playful, but their gambols are dangerous to the timid or unskilful. They are all easily and suddenly alarmed, when anything they do not understand forcibly catches their attention, and they are then to be feared by the bad horseman, and carefully guarded against by the good. Very serious accidents have happened to the best. But, besides their general disposition to playfulness, there is a great propensity in them to become what the jockeys call vicious. Highbred, hot in blood, exercised, fed, and dressed so as to bring that heat to perfection, their tender skins at all times subject to a sharp curry-comb, hard brushing, and when they take sweats, to scraping with wooden instruments, it cannot be but that they are frequently and exceedingly irritated. Intending to make themselves felt and feared, they will watch their opportunity to bite, stamp, or kick ; I mean those among them that are vicious. Tom, the brother of Jack Clarke, after sweating a grey horse that belonged to Lord March, with whom he lived, while he was either scraping or dressing him, was seized by the animal by the shoulder, lifted from the ground, and carried two or three hundred yards before the horse loosened his hold. Old Forester, a horse that belonged to Captain Vernon, all the while I remained at Newmarket, was obliged to be kept apart, and being foundered, to live at grass, where he was confined to a close paddock. Except Tom Watson, a younger brother of John, he would suffer no lad to come near him : if in his paddock, he would run furiously at the first person that approached, and if in the stable, would kick and assault everyone within his reach. Horses of this kind seem always to select their favourite boy. Tom Watson, indeed, had attained to man's estate, and in his brother's absence, which was rare, acted as superintendent. Horses, commonly speaking, are of a friendly and generous nature ; but there are anecdotes of the malignant and savage ferocity of some, that are scarcely to be credited : at least many such are traditional at Newmarket.

"Of their friendly disposition towards their keepers, there is a trait known to every boy that has the care of any one of them, which ought not to be omitted. The custom is to rise very

early, even between two and three in the morning, when the days lengthen. In the course of the day, horses and boys have much to do. About half after eight, perhaps, in the evening, the horse has his last feed of oats, which he generally stands to enjoy in the centre of his smooth, carefully made bed of clean long straw, and by the side of him the weary boy will often lie down : it being held as a maxim, a rule without exception, that were he to lie even till morning, the horse would never lie down himself, but stand still, careful to do his keeper no harm. I should add, however, that the boy must keep awake, not for fear of the horse, but of the mischievous disposition of his comrades. Should sleep happen to overcome him, some lad will take one of those tough ashen plants with which they ride, and, measuring his aim, strike him with all his force, and endeavour to make the longest weal he possibly can on the leg of the sleeper. I remember to have been so punished once, when the blow, I concluded, was given by Tom Watson, as I thought no other boy in the stable could have made so large a weal ; it reached from the knee to the instep, and was of a finger's breadth."

The two-legged stable companions, indeed, were more difficult to manage than the quadrupeds. Familiarity with that noble animal, the horse, does not as a rule prove ennobling ; and we need not be surprised to hear of these boys as a rough, quarrelsome set, among whom a newcomer had to fight his way or have a hard time of it. Young Holcroft's old friend, Jack Clarke, was the most good-natured of the lot, but the others would let these two have no peace till they had a fight. Then Jack, however amiable as a friend, showed himself a most vehement enemy, biting, kicking, and generally fighting on the rough-and-tumble principle, for all which Thomas got the better of him after three or four desperate battles. Next, Jack's brother, Tom, had to have his pretensions set at rest in like manner : "he was prevailed on to venture a second combat but not a third." Having thus made himself the cock of his own dunghill, our hero's pugnacious attention was turned to the boys of Lord March's stable over the way, who lived with their neighbours of Captain Vernon's establishment on somewhat the same terms as the retainers of the Capulet and Montague houses. Upon their eyes and noses also he professes to have done such masteries as to become within a few months

the acknowledged champion among the younger boys of both stables.

His employer, too, is declared not to have been behind-hand in recognising his worth. He was promoted from one horse to another, getting always one more difficult to manage, and generally had the honour of leading the string, a mark of confidence which, by his own account, he did not wholly deserve. When John Watson happened to be out of the way, he could not resist the temptation of giving his comrades a troublesome game of "follow my leader ;" he would make his horse start out of the line and begin to cut capers—

"Would first his mettle bold provoke,
Then soothe or quell his pride—"

an example readily imitated by those behind, to the dismay of indifferent riders, who "would sometimes, before I began the gallop, very humbly entreat me not to play them any tricks, and when they did I was good-natured enough to comply."

But pride will often have a fall, and Thomas did not go without his. Once his horse started so violently at a grey rook rising from a ditch beneath its nose, that the rider was fairly humbled in the dust. Luckily, however, as he happened to be out alone, no eye witnessed his disgrace ; and still more luckily, the horse allowing itself to be caught, he was able to ride home with no stain, such as could not be brushed off, upon his equestrian honour. Another time he was run away with by a great vicious brute as he was riding with a pail to the watering troughs, and at every jolt upon the rough ground, the rim of the pail came whack upon the boy's back. Instead of struggling with him, Thomas, gave him his head, hoping to tire him out, took him at full gallop up Cambridge Hill and back into Newmarket, where surely he would stop at his own stable.

"But no ; away he went into the town, while some boys belonging to other stables exclaimed, 'Here is old Puff running away with Watson's Tom !' At a certain distance down the main street was a street on the left, by which, making a little circle, I might again bring his head homewards, and that road I prevailed on him to take ; but as he was not easily guided, he thought proper to gallop on the causeway, till he came to a post which bent inwards towards the wall, so much that it was doubtful whether his body would pass. He stopped short at a single

step ; but luckily I had foreseen this, or I should certainly have been pitched over his neck, and probably my back would have been broken had I not employed both hands with all my force to counteract the shock. Having measured the distance with his eye, he saw he could pass, which to me was a new danger ; my legs would one or both of them have wanted room, but with the same juvenile activity I raised them on the withers, and away again we went, mutually escaping unhurt. By this time, however, my gentleman was wearied ; in two minutes we were at home, and there he thought proper once more to stop."

There are several such stories of the adventures of horsemanship, which some readers would grudge passing over without a further specimen.

"A little horse was brought us from another stud, whence he had been rejected for being unmanageable. He had shown himself restive, and, besides the snaffle, was ridden in a check-rein. I was immediately placed on his back, and, what seemed rather more extraordinary, ordered to lead the gallop, as usual. I do not know how it happened, but under me he showed very little disposition to be refractory, and, whenever the humour occurred, it was soon overcome : that he was, however, watchful for an opportunity to do mischief, the following incident will discover. Our time for hard exercise had begun perhaps a fortnight or three weeks. As that proceeds, the boys are less cautious, each having less suspicion of his horse. I was leading the gallop one morning, and had gone more than half the way towards the foot of Cambridge Hill, when something induced me to call and speak to a boy behind me ; for which purpose I rather unseated myself, and, as I looked back, rested on my left thigh. The arch traitor no sooner felt the precarious seat I had taken, than he suddenly plunged from the path, had his head between his legs, his heels in the air, and exerting all his power of bodily contortion, flung me from the saddle with only one foot in the stirrup, and both my legs on the off side. I immediately heard the whole set of boys behind shouting triumphantly, 'A calf, a calf !' a phrase of contempt for a boy that is thrown. Though the horse was then in the midst of his wild antics, and increasing his pace to full speed, as far as the tricks he was playing would permit, still, finding I had a foot in the stirrup, I replied to their shouts by a whisper to myself, 'It is no calf yet.' The horse took the usual

course, turned up Cambridge Hill, and now rather increased his speed than his mischievous tricks. This opportunity I took with that rashness of spirit which is peculiar to boys ; and, notwithstanding the prodigious speed and irregular motion of the horse, threw my left leg over the saddle. It was with the utmost difficulty I could preserve my balance, but I did : though by this effort I lost hold of the reins, both my feet were out of the stirrups, and the horse for a moment was entirely his own master. But my grand object was gained : I was once more firmly seated, the reins and the stirrups were recovered. In a twinkling, the horse, instead of being pulled up, was urged to his utmost speed ; and when he came to the end of the gallop, he stopped of himself with a very good will, as he was heartily breathed. The short exclamations of the boys at having witnessed what they thought an impossibility, were the gratification I received, and the greatest, perhaps, that could be bestowed.

“ I once saw an instance of what may be called the grandeur of alarm in a horse. In winter, during short exercise, I was returning one evening on the back of a hunter, that was put in training for the hunter’s plate. There had been some little rain, and the channel, always dry in summer, was then a small brook. As I must have rubbed his legs dry if wetted, I gave him the rein, and made him leap the brook, which he understood as a challenge for play, and beginning to gambol, after a few antics he reared very high, and, plunging forward with great force, alighted with his fore feet on the edge of a deep gravel-pit half filled with water, so near that a very few inches further he must have gone headlong down. His first astonishment and fear were so great, that he stood for some time breathless and motionless : then gradually recollecting himself, his back became curved, his ears erect, his hind and fore leg in a position for sudden retreat ; his nostrils from an inward snort burst into one loud expression of horror ; and rearing on his hind legs, he turned short round, expressing all the terrors he had felt by the utmost violence of plunging, kicking, and other bodily exertions. I was not quite so much frightened as he had been, but I was heartily glad, when he became quiet again, that the accident had been no worse.”

III.

THE very rudiments of what we call education were considered quite superfluous for a stable boy of last century; and during the two or three years that this boy remained at Newmarket, however likely he might be judged to make a good jockey or groom, he was hardly in the fair way of becoming a man of letters. Yet he never forgot his early turn for reading, as often as a book came in his way, which would be seldom enough. For years the best part of his reading had been the Bible, wherever he found one, and such old ballads or other rude broadsides as were sometimes posted up on the walls of cottages and little alehouses, the library of the poor. He is not quite sure whether at this period of his life he had learned to write. But poor as his attainments were, he had the true love of learning ever prompting him to self-improvement. On how many idle young gentlemen were the most costly educational facilities being mainly wasted, while this foundling child of the muses was slowly and painfully groping towards his proper birthright!

Thomas had been at Newmarket some half a year, when his father followed him there, led partly by love of his son, and partly by the love of change which we have remarked in this curious character. The mother and the rest of the family have some time back disappeared from the story, where they make but a shadowy appearance at any time. Holcroft began in this new scene by getting work at the old trade of shoemaking, presently being employed to carry a mail-bag, and before long taking flight again in his restless search for fortune. One of his shopmates, also distinguished as a cock-feeder, was a man of reading and of books. He had such volumes as "Gulliver's Travels" and the "Spectator," which he lent to young Thomas, to his great profit and delight, and talked to him about them, and rejoiced the proud father by agreeing that his was no ordinary boy.

Other people besides his father and the literary cock-feeder began to take notice of Thomas's taste for scholarship. A schoolmaster in the town offered to teach such a promising pupil gratis. He gladly accepted the proposal, and at his first appearance filled the other boys with respectful admiration by spelling no less a word than *Mahershalalhashbaz* off-hand as

neatly as he would have cleared a five-barred gate. So he says, though after all we observe that he or his printer spells it wrong! He found himself immediately placed at the head of the school; but the master turned out to be such a drunkard that after going three times Thomas would have nothing more to do with him.

Nothing daunted by this fiasco, he paid five shillings for a three-months' course of arithmetic with a journeyman maker of leather breeches. For want of better apparatus he used to cast up his sums with an old nail upon the paling of the stable-yard; but goodwill goes further than any amount of stationery, and at the end of the three months the rule of three, he says, no longer puzzled him, nor did practice drive him mad, as his companions prophesied it would. He showed a great taste for music also, which he boldly attacked both practically and theoretically, spending many a forenoon lying in the hayloft, studious over a book of psalmody, though the technical terms puzzled him sorely. He had already joined a choir for the practice of Church music, taught by the same accomplished breeches-maker, to whom, as music-master, he paid another five shillings a quarter out of his small wages. Many much richer students would not be willing to spend at the rate of half their incomes on instruction! Except a few French lessons that he once took in after life, we are told that this is the whole story of his schooling. Everything else he taught himself.

The worst of it was that with his head so full of these new studies he could not always make enough room for attention to his work. His kind master had to find fault with him for forgetfulness when he had been sent an errand, which startled him like the curb in the mouth of a high-tempered horse. Betty, John Watson's cross old housekeeper, joined the other boys in jeering at this one, who wasted his time over books and the like. He could only console himself by thinking how truly inferior spirits theirs were; indeed, we are sorry to see him a little too conscious of his own superiority. These boys were all afraid to go alone into the yard after dark. Old Betty was quite as ignorant and superstitious; she declared herself to have once been assailed by two imps of the devil, whom she defeated by taking them up with the tongs and throwing them into the hottest part of the kitchen fire! She had much to say

of ghosts, goblins, and witchcraft, and it was in vain that our young philosopher tried to reason with her, having convinced himself of the facility with which the senses may be deceived and alarmed. All the rest of the boys made bargains with some other to go in couples into the yard at night; but Thomas Holcroft refusing to pair off with anyone, his namesake Tom was left without a mate. Then this other Tom had to bribe our Tom at the rate of a halfpenny a night to accompany him when it fell to his turn to fetch hay or straw, so much was it worth to be an *esprit fort* in a racing-stable. There is a tragic tale to tell of one of these nocturnal convoys, which gave opportunity for showing a halfpennyworth of courage.

"We had at this time in the stables a very beautiful male tabby cat, as remarkable for his familiarity with the horses and boys as for his fine colours, symmetry, and strength. He would go through the stable night by night, and place himself on the withers, first of this horse, then of the next, and there familiarly take his sleep, till he had made the whole round. The boys had taught him several tricks, which he very willingly repeated as often as they gave the signal, without taking offence at the rogueries they occasionally practised upon him; so that he was a general favourite with every one, from John Watson, even to old Betty. One evening, as I was going with Tom to get his hay, and we approached the stable in which it happened then to be kept, Tom leading the road (for cowards are always desirous to convince themselves they are really valiant), a very sudden, vehement, and discordant noise was heard, to listen to which Tom's valour was wholly unequal. Flying from the stable, he was at the back-door of the house in a twinkling. I was paid for my courage: pride and curiosity concurred to make me show it, and I remained firm at my post. I stood still, while the noise at intervals was several times repeated. It was the beginning of winter, and at one end of the stable a certain quantity of autumn wheat was stowed. I recollected this circumstance, and, after considering some time, at length the truth struck me, and I called: 'Come along, Tom; it is the cat and the rats fighting, but they will leave off when they hear us come into the stable.' We had neither candle nor lantern. It was a maxim with John Watson to trust no such things with boys whose nightly duty it was to fetch trusses of straw and armfuls of hay; but I entered the stable, gave Tom

his hay, loaded myself with my own, and confident in the valour of our favourite cat, said to him, "We shall find a rare number of dead rats to-morrow, Tom." I knew not the power of numbers nor the imbecility of an individual so exposed. The next morning we found our hero lying dead in the stable, with only three dead rats beside him."

One good point Holcroft notes in the character of his comrades. They had an almost sacred fear of neglecting their stable duties, stronger even than their fear of ghosts; they were in a manner horse-worshippers. Beyond this sense of daily duty—an excellent thing so far as it went—they would have little more sympathy with religious aspirations than the animals they tended so carefully. It was not so with Thomas. There is at least one training-stable at the present day where the boys are well taught, attend morning and evening prayers in their master's house, and have every chance of growing up something better than the companions of brutes; but perhaps at any time such a boy as this would find himself out of place in the atmosphere of a stable. He loved to read not only the Bible, but the "Pilgrim's Progress," the "Whole Duty of Man," and other religious works. He had a high idea, young as he was, of angelic purity, and looked up with awful reverence to the attributes of the Godhead—ideas and feelings in strange contrast with the roughness of his surroundings. Traces of angelic purity were few and far between at Newmarket. He saw little in the people about him but petty vulgar vices, such as their means could afford; and visitors from the world beyond came here mainly to take part in the grand carnivals of racing, cock-fighting, gambling and cheating which were the staple of this too-well-known town.

It is difficult to keep one's self clean among pitch, and a stable-boy, however superior to most boys, cannot be expected to be always steadily wiser than his neighbours. Our hero, for the best part of his time, never betted a sixpence; but at last he allowed himself to be infected by the spirit of the place. He heard so many exciting stories of fortunes made and lost in a day, of the shrewdness of bookmakers, the boldness of speculators—why might he not be as fortunate? With his companions he repeated recklessly, "*Never venture, never win,*" and carried away by the lust of gain, made in one day bets to the amount of more than half his year's wages. But soon he

was reminded that everybody can't win at this game. Almost all his ventures turned out ill ; his crowns and half-crowns vanished one by one ; so that, at the end of the week's racing, he had lost some guinea-and-a-half : about as much as his education cost him from first to last, and nothing here to show for it.

Then, like other ill-doers whose doings have turned out ill in every way, he was heartily disgusted with himself. He felt humiliated to think that these ignorant boys, whom he had despised in all ways, and beaten even at their own work, should yet beso much more cunning or lucky in laying bets than his superior self. He had to look forward to the ordeal of confessing to his father, who would sooner or later be sure to call him to account for the loss of so much money. And now that it was too late, he remembered how gambling was reprobated in the good books he had loved to read. He had sold his virtue and lost his money into the bargain. It was a bitter lesson for him against that vice of folly which, seldom giving any sure gain, and always at the expense of another's loss, is least likely to ruin those that taste the sour side of it at the outset, and can go free for a wry face.

Thomas saw cause to leave betting alone for the future ; but having once entertained the notion of making money without earning it, he took up with another wild scheme of repairing his little fortune. The races were over ; thousands of guineas had changed hands upon the course during the last week ; was it not likely that a stray coin or purse might have been left lying somewhere ? His imagination fired by this hope, he spent a whole day searching the heath in the hope of gleaning some such remnant of that harvest of folly and knavery. He even went out for an hour at night, to renew the attempt at money-finding by moonlight ; but again he had to come back wearied and dejected without having lit upon a single copper.

This disappointment filled up the cup of his disgust. He had already consulted his father—in London again by this time—as to leaving Newmarket ; and such a roving parent was hardly the man to preach steadiness to his son. He now gave John Watson warning, who told him he was a blockhead, and urged him to stay, for he was sure to do well. But Thomas was not to be persuaded ; at the end of the year he left for London. His master, he says, was sorry and hurt at his going ; the learned breeches-maker and his fellow singers in the choir

took leave of him with regret ; but the other stable-boys did not seem to care one way or other, except Jack Clarke, who had been his first friend at Newmarket, and was now the last to give him a kindly word at parting. Poor Jack, some time before, had met with a sad misfortune, which afforded Thomas a chance of doing something to repay his early obligations. The story is one of which all thoughtless boys should take good heed ; to this day we see the same accident chronicled over and over again in country newspapers.

“ Jack Clarke, now about eighteen, was spending his evening before nine o'clock in his good-natured way among the boys of Lord March, who lived opposite. One of them (I forget his name) took down a fowling-piece that was hanging over the kitchen chimney, and playing that trick which has been so repeatedly, and in my opinion so strangely, played, said, ‘ Now, Jack, I'll shoot you.’ As he spoke, he pulled the trigger, and the distance between them being short, Clarke was shot on the left side of his face, the middle half of which immediately became as frightful a wound as perhaps was ever beheld. The lads of both stables were there instantly ; the grooms came the moment they could be found, and the terror and distress of the scene were very great, for everybody felt kindness for Jack Clarke. Tom Watson was despatched on horseback to Cambridge in search of all the surgical and medical aid that could be obtained ; and such was his speed, that the surgeon, the doctor, and himself, were back by midnight, and the medical men busy in probing, inquiring, and consulting, while poor Clarke lay groaning, extended on the bed of John Watson. The left cheek-bone, eye, and other parts, were shattered past hope : the case was thought precarious, there was a bare possibility that the patient, miserable as he was, and shocking to look at, might survive.

“ When the physician and surgeon had done all that they could by dressing and giving orders, John Watson took them under his care for the night. Whether he found beds and entertainment for them at an inn, or at the house of a friend, I know not ; but as I saw him no more, I suppose he remained with them to keep them company, for such scenes do not immediately dispose the mind to sleep. Among ourselves at home, however, a very serious question arose, no less than that of who should sit up and watch with him all night ? His suffer-

ings were so incessant, his groans so terrifying, and the wounds (by which the inside of the head was made visible) had been so bloody, raw, and torn, being at the same time most frightfully spread all round with gunpowder, and black and red spots, that every person present frankly owned they durst not stay alone all night with him in the same chamber. When it was proposed to old Betty, she was in an agony. All the older boys expressed the terror it would give them :—some sleep must be had, and it being winter, the stables were open before four. What, therefore, could be done? I own I was almost like the rest, but I most truly pitied poor Jack Clarke. I had always felt a kindness for him, and to see him forsaken at so distressing a moment, left by himself in such a wretched state, no one able to foresee what he might want, overcame me, and I said, ‘ Well, since nobody else will, I must ! ’ Besides, by an action so bold, performed by a boy at my age, I gained an undeniable superiority, of which any one of the elder boys would have been proud.

“The medical men remained at Newmarket, or went and came as their business required, while Jack Clarke continued under their hands. I was truly anxious for his cure, though, from what I had seen on the first night, and from my ignorance in surgery, I had supposed such a thing impossible. I was therefore surprised that he should seem at first to linger on, that afterwards the wounds should fill up, and assume a less frightful appearance, and that at length a perfect cure should be effected. It was certainly thought to do great honour to Cambridge. The left eye was lost, the appearance of the bones was disfigured, and the deep stain of the gunpowder remained. But before I came away appearances varied, the marks of the gunpowder became less ; and when I left Newmarket, Jack Clarke had been long restored to the stables, where he continued to live, apparently in good health.”

At this point ends Holcroft’s autobiography, begun only on his death-bed. It is to be regretted that he did not live to finish such a story of trial and vicissitude. He was not quite sixteen when he left Newmarket and went up to London. There he became, in turn, a shoemaker, a schoolmaster in a small way, a journalist, and a strolling player, in which precarious occupation he remained for some years. At one time he was brought almost to the point of enlisting as a private soldier

in the East India Company's service. But at last, after many struggles, he was able to make his powers known as an author and dramatist, and had the satisfaction of supporting his old father, who still, as ever, could not settle down anywhere, even when he might have lived in comfort.

Our hero is perhaps best known as a speculative politician, in which capacity he had the honour of a prosecution for high treason, but got off with the penalty of being looked upon by many respectable people as a dangerous character. It was at the end of last century, when most earnest minds concerned for the welfare of their fellow-men had been kindled by the early hopes of the French Revolution, while the wild excesses of its partisans soon spread a panic among the more dull and timid members of society—that is, the majority of well-to-do Englishmen—and the very names of liberty and reform came to be held in suspicion. Thus some of the best-meaning men in the country were ostracised, prosecuted, and exiled for advocating ideas which almost everyone now looks upon as commonplaces of political doctrine. To Thomas Holcroft and the like of him we owe it, perhaps, that at that crisis England did not lose the secret of her growth in orderly liberty, through which she is the wonder and the envy of Europe.

“ A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where freedom broadens slowly down
From precedent to precedent.”

The reforms which Holcroft had at heart have been and are being carried out ; and, as one result, the organization of society is more and more favourable to letting the right people find their way into the right places. Much yet remains to be done ; the Lord Booby and the Honourable Fitznoodles have still too great a start in the race of life, while many abler men are still condemned to spend all their powers in reaching the point from which they might have done good to the world. But the time grows nearer when each of us shall have a fair chance to show what is in him ; and already our school-boards have done much to make things easier for the Hugh Millers and Thomas Holcrofts of a future generation.



A REBEL BOY.

I.

THE boyhood of Ebenezer Fox was cast in that troubled time which led to the independence of his native country, the great Transatlantic Republic. He was born in 1763, when the power of Britain in America seemed to have just been firmly established by the end of the long French war and the acquisition of Canada. But this gain had come through much loss and expense; and the colonies were no sooner at peace than disputes arose as to how the cost of their defence should be met. The mother country, following the high-handed policy with which all along it had treated its dependencies, proposed to lay taxes on them without their consent, whereas they believed themselves to have already borne more than their fair share of the burden. The colonists angrily protested; the British Government proved rash and obstinate; ill-feeling increased on either side, till at last, in 1775, broke out the unnatural war which so unhappily divided our English-speaking race.

Our hero grew up in the very hot-bed of all this excitement. His father was a tailor at Roxbury, in Massachusetts, a poor man with a large family, who in these hard times found it difficult to fill so many mouths. The first thing worth mentioning that the boy remembers is being sent out at the early age of seven to make his own living. He was placed with a farmer in the neighbourhood, and remained in his service five

years, helping about the house and the farm. Naturally he did not like this so well as being at home ; the work was hard and the fare was rough ; and though in his old age he philosophically professes that he should have been more contented, he still looks back on his lot as worse than that of other boys of the same age, while at the time he thought himself very ill-used, and made frequent complaints to his father, who, however, paid no attention to them, supposing it best to let the boy learn betimes that we are not to have things as we wish them in this world.

Such being the state of his affairs, Ebenezer was much taken by the doctrines of liberty and independence which he heard on all sides so warmly advocated, and which seemed to him very fit for application to his own case. Everybody was talking of the injustice and tyranny of the English Government ; there was a spirit of complaint and disaffection in the air, and boys like him, he tells us, without understanding the public questions at issue, naturally became moved to consider their own rights and wrongs. Were they not more oppressed by hard masters and teachers than their elders appeared to be ? Was it not their duty and privilege to stand up for themselves, if they could, since no one else spoke of liberty for them ? Why should all the independence be on the side of the old folks ? Thus was the rising generation infected by the general sentiments ; and young Fox, for one, began at the age of twelve to think of carrying out a little revolution of his own. While grown-up people were still talking, he would take a bold step and shake off the yoke of his private tyrant.

But a revolution is nothing without a conspiracy, and it takes two at least to conspire against any government. With the natural instinct of the human mind which makes it shrink from entering alone upon any strange and hazardous course of action, our hero cast about for a companion in his adventure, and soon found one, by name James Kelley, a boy rather older than himself, in the service of a gentleman, who, though good and kind, had lost all character to respect by being a "Tory," a supporter of the hated British Government. What better excuse could any servant of his have for running away ! The two boys laid their wise heads together, and after some secret confabulations agreed that they were living in a state of servitude intolerable for the sons of freemen, that they were quite capable of taking

care of themselves, as well as entitled to follow their own wishes, and that therefore they would do what a great many other discontented boys have done both in England and America, to wit, seek their fortunes at sea.

This plan having been resolved upon, the consideration of ways and means was next in order. The few belongings of these boys made two small bundles, which were hid away in a barn ready for a start. At eight o'clock on the night of April 18, 1775, the comrades met by appointment at the door of a church, when their work was over and they were supposed to be going to bed. The first question they exchanged was as to how much money each had, and it was easily answered. Ebenezer possessed half a dollar to begin the world upon. Kelley had just the same sum, which seems to have come into his hands in a somewhat irregular manner. "I might have taken as much as I wanted from the old Tory," he declared with conscious pride and contempt, "but I thought I would not take any more than what belonged to me,"—by way of wages due, we are to suppose. Thus lightly burdened in purse and conscience, they set out on their way for Providence, the chief town of Rhode Island.

Now it so happened that the flight of these lads coincided with an event of much greater importance, the actual outbreak of the American Revolution. That very night the British troops had marched out of Boston to seize the military stores at Concord, and an alarm was being given all over the country. Through the night the militia were assembling, church-bells were ringing, guns firing, lights shining at unwonted hours, and in all directions Ebenezer and his companion found people up and moving, eager to learn the news. Not being very well "posted" in the political situation, our runaways could not but fancy that all this commotion must have something to do with their escapade.* Their consciences began to reproach them and their fears magnified the danger, as they slunk along in the darkness, astonished that such a hue-and-cry should be made after such insignificant persons as themselves. They were almost afraid to ask their way, and finding themselves very tired

* There is a story called "The Young Rebels," by A. R. Hope, the opening chapters of which seem to be an expansion of this amusing mistake. Such is the way in which those writers of "fiction" get possession of their materials—"convey, the wise it call."

after two hours walking on the top of their day's work, they lay down under shelter of a stone wall, to spend a cold, uncomfortable night on the ground with their bundles for pillows.

"This is a hard lodging, Kelley, but we may have harder," remarked Ebenezer by way of comfort, little knowing how truly he spoke.

In the morning they were early on foot again, and breakfasted at a tavern on a bowl of bread and milk, which should have cost threepence, but the goodnatured landlord would not take their money. They were constantly meeting with people who wanted to know where they came from, to which they gave cautious answers, still at a loss as to the reason of all this curiosity. When they stopped at another tavern in the village of Walpole, they found a crowd of people collected, who, seeing the boys come from the direction of Boston, set upon them with questions that they did not care or did not know how to answer. The landlord disquieted them by abruptly asking where they were going.

"To seek our fortunes," they replied.

"You have taken hard times for it," said he, and advised them to go home.

But now the mystery of all this public excitement began to clear up. The stage-coach arrived from Boston, and the passengers, getting out to dine, brought news, not very correct as it afterwards appeared, of the collision of the British troops and the militia at Lexington, the enemy being declared to have had the worst of it. As a matter of fact the real battle had not yet begun, though at sunrise that morning the first blood had been shed; but this report was received with loud cheers, and the local militia marched off full of ardour to join their comrades.

Ebenezer and Kelley, pursuing their private expedition, set about driving a bargain with the coachman of the stage to carry them to Providence. After a good deal of haggling, it was agreed that both of them should go for two and eightpence, one perched up uncomfortably beside the driver, and the other holding on as best he could among the baggage, where he must have had plenty of jolting for his money. Leaving Walpole early in the afternoon, they arrived at Providence about sunset, tired, hungry, and disconsolate.

For the first time they found themselves "strangers in a strange land." Of all the people who were moving about the



THE BATTLE OF LEXINGTON.

streets, going home to their families and friends, no one cared for these two poor boys who had no home to go to. With only a few coppers left in their pockets an inn was out of the question for them. They sat down on that familiar resting-place, the steps of a church, and eat some of the scanty provisions in their bundles; then they had to look for cheap lodgings. Prowling about the wharves, they saw a vessel which appeared to have no one on board. The cabin-doors were open; the boys stole in, took possession of two vacant berths, and slept soundly till morning, when they left without meeting anyone to call them to account. Such was their first taste of a sailor's life.

After strolling about the town in rather low spirits, and breakfasting on what was left of their provisions, they thought best to separate in search of employment, and did so, boy-like, without making any appointment for another meeting. Kelley went his way, and Ebenezer never saw him again, nor could hear anything of him except that he had got a place on board a ship. He himself, wandering about, found his way into the market-house, and saw there an old gentleman attired after the fashion of the day, in three-cornered hat, club wig, long broad-skirted coat, breeches and shoes fastened with large buckles, whose face seemed familiar to him. On inquiry he learned that this was, as he supposed, a certain Obadiah Curtis, who had recently removed from Boston to Providence. An aunt of Ebenezer's had lived in service with him at Boston, and to the boy's great satisfaction, she turned out to have accompanied her employer's family in their change of abode. So he was not friendless here after all.

This aunt was naturally surprised to see her nephew so far from home. He, on his part, tried to conceal the truth, but after a good many questions, she got at something like the real state of the case, and did all she could to persuade him to return. Finding, however, that he was bent on going to sea, the good woman made the best of it by providing him with plenty to eat, as well as with some clothes of which he stood in need, till at the end of a few days he found a place as cabin-boy on board a ship bound for the island of St. Domingo. One would suppose that the aunt might have written to his family to let them know what had become of him. But letters were serious matters in these days, and she was probably more at home with pots and pans than with pen and ink; so the father

and mother at Roxbury remained for some months without news of their runaway boy.

Tolerably well equipped, thanks to the good aunt, Ebenezer started on his first voyage, passed through the usual experience of sea-sickness, learned that a skipper can be as rough a master as a farmer, and, in short, had all the romance rubbed off a boy's ideas of life on the ocean wave. The passage out and home was a smooth enough one, and he had no taste of adventure till the ship was once more off the coast of Connecticut. During her absence, the Revolutionary war having fairly begun, every British man-of-war had become an enemy to American commerce. The captain tried to run into Providence through the night, trusting to a favourable wind for eluding the cruisers which were known to be on the look-out; but the wind fell, and at daybreak he found himself close to three British ships. Higher up the bay some American vessels, of much inferior force, were seen making signals for Ebenezer's ship to press all sail towards them. Unfortunately her people did not understand these signals, and were doubtful whether they came from friend or foe. They tacked one way and another, trying to beat up the bay; but as two cruisers were to the windward of them, while a small tender blocked the way ahead, they saw no chance of escape unless by running their ship on shore.

This having been done, the crew jumped overboard and swam to land under the fire of the tender. The captain advised Ebenezer to stay where he was and be taken prisoner, supposing that no great harm could happen to a boy like him; but he, after some hesitation, chose rather the risk of being drowned. With nothing on but his shirt and trousers, he plunged into the sea, and, spurred by the whistling and splashing of bullets about his head, came to shore without injury, though nearly exhausted by fear and fatigue. So much was he in dread of pursuit, that finding his wet clothes an encumbrance to him in passing through a corn-field, he hastily stripped them off, and ran on naked till he managed to catch up his ship-mates, who were not a little amused by his appearance in such a plight.

"Hallo! my boy," exclaimed one of them; "you cut a pretty figure! Not from the garden of Eden, I can swear for it, for you have not even an apron of fig-leaves to cover you

with. You were not born to be drowned, I see, though you may live to be hanged."

But after a few more such jests at his expense, the mate good-naturedly took off one of two shirts with which he was equipped for the nonce, and let Ebenezer rig himself out in this ample garment, that covered him from head to feet ; and when they ventured to halt at a cottage, the mistress, taking pity on his grotesque condition, gave him a decent suit of clothes. But, as he says, his first voyage could not be considered very successful, since he came back from it stark naked.

His aunt at Providence gave him a long lecture, and would fain have him think of this misfortune as a judgment on him for running away from home. She tried to persuade him to return to his father, offering her services as peace-maker. But the boy would not go back till he had some better result to show for his wilfulness ; and the aunt again supplying generous help, he was in a few days equipped for a second voyage, which he made to the same port, and from which he returned, this time, all safe, with more money than he had ever had before in his pocket.

Now he was willing enough to go home, and set out on foot for Roxbury, where he found the camp of the American army engaged in besieging Boston. His parents had removed to Dorchester, three miles off. For six months they had heard no news of him, and, though they guessed he must have gone to sea, this was in his mother's eyes almost as bad as being lost outright. So when he made his appearance, his ghost could hardly have caused the good woman greater agitation. His father took it more coolly, yet he was clearly not sorry to see the scapegrace back again. The mother hastened to give him his breakfast ; the father cleared his throat for a grave rebuke ; but, in the end, it was understood that by-gones were to be by-gones, and the boy might stay at home and choose a trade for himself.

The tailor could now better afford to keep his large family, since he found plenty of employment in working for the soldiers in the camp. There, too, Ebenezer found plenty of amusement and interest during the ensuing winter ; in the way of work, he went to school for a spell, and made himself generally useful about the house. When the British had evacuated Boston, communication being restored with the country, he

paid a visit to the town, where he got employment on probation with Mr. John Bosson, barber, and manufacturer of wigs. This business proving likely to suit him, he was regularly apprenticed to it, a much more elaborate and important occupation then, as he reminds us, than it is now, when people have the common sense to wear their own hair as nature has given it them. His chief work at first was in the preparation of hair for wigs, while now and then he would be allowed to try his 'prentice-hand at scraping the face of some unlucky chance-customer, "who might reasonably be expected never to call again for a repetition of the operation." But, remaining in Mr. Bosson's service till the age of sixteen, he did not fail to make due progress in the mysteries of his art.

II.

THREE years our hero now passed quietly, curling and shaving at Boston, while the war between Britain and her colonies was stoutly waged with varying fortunes. Professional soldiering being a thing almost unknown in the States, there was no little difficulty in keeping the ranks of Washington's army full. In 1779, the militia of Massachusetts were called on for a quota of men to march to New York as a reinforcement to the American army in that neighbourhood. Ebenezer's master was one of the men drawn for this service; but such a demand upon his patriotism proved most unwelcome to the worthy citizen.

"One day, while my fellow apprentice and myself were at work, Mr. Bosson entered the shop labouring under great agitation of mind. It was evident that something had happened to discompose his temper, which was naturally somewhat irritable. He walked rapidly about, occasionally stopping, and honing several razors that he had put in perfect order previous to his going out, and attempting to sharpen a pair of shears that at the time bore the keenest edge; he furnished us with much food for conjecture as to the cause of his strange conduct. At length, from various ejaculations, and now and then a half-smothered curse upon his ill-luck, we gathered the fact, that he was enrolled among the soldiers who were soon to take up the line of march for New York. This was an un-

fortunate business for him ; a reality he had not anticipated. The idea of shouldering a musket, buckling on a knapsack, leaving his quiet family, and marching several hundred miles for the good of his country, never took a place in his mind. Although a firm friend to his country, and willing to do all he could to help along her cause, as far as expressing favourable opinions and good wishes availed, yet there was an essential difference in his mind between the theory and the art of war ; between acting the soldier, and triumphing at the soldier's success.

"The reality of his position operated as a safety-valve to let off the steam of his patriotism, and to leave him in a state of languor well calculated to produce in him a degree of resignation for remaining at home. But what was to be done ? A substitute could not be obtained for the glory that might be acquired in the service ; and as for money, no hopes could be entertained of raising sufficient for the purpose. Mr. Bosson continued to fidget about, uttering such expressions as his excited feelings prompted, allowing us to catch a disconnected sentence, such as : ' Hard times——don't need two apprentices any more than a toad needs a tail ;'——' If either of you had the spunk of a louse, you would offer to go for me.' With this last remark he quitted the shop apparently in high dudgeon."

It was plain what he meant to be at. Substitutes were hardly to be found for love or money ; indeed, there was very little money in the country at this trying time, and business was almost at a stand. Mr. Bosson's only chance of getting off lay in one of the apprentices being willing to take such a wide view of his duties as to volunteer in his master's stead ; and luckily for him Ebenezer proved not unwilling to do so. The monotonous life of the shop had been irksome to him for some time past ; his fellow-apprentice, afraid of being called upon himself, egged him on ; Mr. Bosson received the offer of his services with the greatest satisfaction, equipping him liberally for the campaign, and packing him off at once before his zeal should have time to grow cool. So, when not quite sixteen, he found himself paraded on Boston Common as a soldier, under the weight of a heavy gun and knapsack.

But in the army he was to see no more dangerous service than against the geese and fowls of some farmer on the line of march, petty depredations as to which the officers seem to have been not over-strict. His company was quartered at Albany

for a time ; then, General Washington having abandoned the design of attacking New York, they were discharged, each man receiving three thousand dollars in paper-money, the value of which may be guessed from the fact that a simple meal cost one hundred and fifty dollars. Ebenezer reached home exhausted and almost crippled by marching ill-clothed in severe weather ; he had had quite enough of a soldier's life, and when, after a few days' rest, he went back to work, he assured Mr. Bosson that nothing would induce him to act again as his or anybody's substitute.

In a year or two, however, the lad's adventurous turn once more got the better of him, and he wanted to be off to sea. His master was ready to consent, on condition of receiving half of the apprentice's pay and prize-money—not a bad bargain for Mr. Bosson in the depressed state of trade. There was no difficulty about getting a berth. The State of Massachusetts was fitting out a twenty-gun ship, named the *Protector*, to guard her commerce against the British cruisers, whose activity had almost put an end to it. A recruiting-officer, carrying the brand-new stripes and stars, and attended by a band of music, paraded the streets with a mob of idlers at his heels, stopping every now and then to make a speech about patriotism, glory, prize-money, and so forth. He was a jovial, talkative fellow, as liberal of promises and flattery as are most recruiting-officers ; and when he saw any likely lads among the crowd, he would strike up this doggerel stave :

“ All you that have bad masters,
And cannot get your due ;
Come, come, my brave boys,
And join our ship's crew ! ”

Then the patriotic bystanders raised a shout and a cheer ; and some excitable youths would be stirred into offering themselves. Among the rest, Ebenezer Fox came forward, and, when he had signed the ship's papers and mounted a cockade, felt “ already more than half a sailor.”

The recruiting went on slowly. As soon as the ship was ready to take her crew, she was hauled off into the channel that they might not run away again. When between three and four hundred men of all sorts and ages had, by fair means or foul, been “ carried, dragged, or driven on board,” most of

them, it has to be confessed, in some stage of intoxication, the uproar and confusion were indescribable ; our hero can only compare this motley crew to Falstaff's ragged regiment. With such rough materials to be licked into sailors, the *Protector* set sail for a six months' cruise, and was not long in coming in sight of the enemy.

Their first encounter was with two English ships of war, each of sixteen or eighteen guns, which to their surprise stood away from them, though of far greater force. Then they were cruising for two months off Newfoundland, most of the time in a dense fog, without meeting either friend or foe. But on the morning of June 9th, 1780, the fog began to clear away, and they saw a large ship under English colours to the windward, standing athwart their starboard bow. Our hero was now to have an opportunity of describing a naval engagement.

"As she came down upon us, she appeared as large as a seventy-four ; and we were not deceived respecting her size, for it afterwards proved that she was an old East-Indiaman, of eleven hundred tons burden, fitted out as a letter-of-marque for the West-India trade, mounted with thirty-two guns, and furnished with a complement of one hundred and fifty men. She was called the *Admiral Duff*, commanded by Richard Strang, from St. Christopher and St. Eustatia, laden with sugar and tobacco, and bound to London. I was standing near our first lieutenant, Mr. Little, who was calmly examining the enemy, as she approached, with his spy-glass, when Captain Williams stepped up and asked his opinion of her. The lieutenant applied the glass to his eye again and took a deliberate look in silence, and replied, 'I think she is a heavy ship, and that we shall have some hard fighting ; but of one thing I am certain, she is not a frigate ; if she were, she would not keep yawing, and showing her broadsides as she does ; she would show nothing but her head and stern : we shall have the advantage of her, and the quicker we get alongside the better.' Our captain ordered English colours to be hoisted, and the ship to be cleared for action. The shrill pipe of the boatswain summoned all hands to their duty. The bedding and hammocks of the sailors were brought up from between decks, the bedding placed in the hammocks, and lashed up in the nettings ; our courses hauled up ; the top-gallant sails

clewed down ; and every preparation was made, which a skilful officer could suggest, or active sailors perform.

"The enemy approached till within musket-shot of us. The two ships were so near to each other that we could distinguish the officers from the men ; and I particularly noticed the captain, on the gangway, a noble looking man, having a large gold-laced cocked-hat on his head, and a speaking-trumpet in his hand. Lieutenant Little possessed a powerful voice, and he was directed to hail the enemy ; at the same time the quarter-master was ordered to stand ready to haul down the English flag and to hoist up the American. Our lieutenant took his station on the after part of the starboard-gangway, and, elevating the trumpet, exclaimed, 'Hallo ! whence come you ?'—'From Jamaica, bound to London,' was the answer. 'What is the ship's name ?' inquired the lieutenant. 'The *Admiral Duff*,' was the reply.

"The English captain then thought it his time to interrogate, and asked the name of our ship. Lieutenant Little, in order to gain time, put the trumpet to his ear, pretending not to hear the question. During the short interval thus gained, Captain Williams called upon the gunner to ascertain how many guns could be brought to bear upon the enemy. 'Five,' was the answer. 'Then fire, and shift the colours,' were the orders. The cannons poured forth their deadly contents, and, with the first flash, the American flag took the place of the British ensign at our mast-head.

"The compliment was returned in the form of a full broadside, and the action commenced. I was stationed on the edge of the quarter-deck, to sponge and load a six-pounder : this position gave me a fine opportunity to see the whole action. Broadside were exchanged with great rapidity for nearly an hour ; our fire, as we afterwards ascertained, produced a terrible slaughter among the enemy, while our loss was as yet trifling.

"I happened to be looking for a moment towards the main deck, when a large shot came through our ship's side and killed Mr. Benjamin Scollay, a very promising young man, who was, I think, a midshipman. At this moment a shot from one of our marines killed the man at the wheel of the enemy's ship, and, his place not being immediately supplied, she was brought alongside of us in such a manner as to bring her bowsprit

directly across our fore-castle. Not knowing the cause of this movement, we supposed it to be the intention of the enemy to board us. Our boarders were ordered to be ready with their pikes to resist any such attempt, while our guns on the main deck were sending death and destruction among the crew of the enemy. Their principal object now seemed to be to get liberated from us, and by cutting away some of their rigging they were soon clear, and at the distance of a pistol-shot.

"The action was then renewed with additional fury; broadside for broadside continued with unabated vigour; at times so near to each other that the muzzles of our guns came almost in contact, then again at such a distance as to allow of taking deliberate aim. The contest was obstinately continued by the enemy, although we could perceive that great havoc was made among them, and that it was with much difficulty that their men were compelled to remain at their quarters.

"A charge of grape-shot came in at one of our port-holes, which dangerously wounded four or five of our men, among whom was our third lieutenant, Mr. Little, brother to the first. His life was despaired of, but by the kind attention he received from his brother, and the surgeon, he finally recovered, though he bore evidence of the severity of his wounds through life.

"While Captain Williams was walking the quarter-deck, which he did during the whole action, a shot from the enemy struck the speaking trumpet from his hand, and sent it to a considerable distance from him. He picked it up with great calmness of manner, and resumed his walk without appearing to have been at all disturbed by the circumstance.

"The battle still continued with unabated vigour on both sides, till our marksmen had killed or wounded all the men in the fore, main, and mizen tops of the enemy. The action had now lasted about an hour and a half, and the fire from the enemy began to slacken, when we suddenly discovered that all the sails on her mainmast were enveloped in a blaze. The fire spread with amazing rapidity, and, running down the after-rigging, it soon communicated with the magazine, when her whole stern was blown off, and her valuable cargo emptied into the sea. All feelings of hostility now ceased, and those of pity were excited in our breasts for the miserable crew that survived the catastrophe.

"Our enemy's ship was now a complete wreck, though she

still floated, and the survivors were endeavouring to save themselves in the only boat that had escaped the general destruction. The humanity of our captain urged him to make all possible exertion to save the miserable, wounded, and burnt wretches, who were struggling for their lives in the water. The ship of the enemy was greatly our superior in size, and lay much higher out of the water.

"Our boats had been much exposed to his fire, as they were placed on spars between the fore and main masts during the action, and had suffered considerable damage. The carpenters were ordered to repair them with the utmost expedition, and we got them out in season to take up fifty-five men, the greater part of whom had been wounded by our shot, or burned when the powder-magazine exploded. These men exhibited a spectacle truly heart-rending to behold. Their limbs were mutilated by all manner of wounds, while some were burned to such a degree that the skin was nearly flayed from their bodies. Our surgeon and his assistants had just completed the task of dressing the wounds of our own crew, and then they directed their attention to the wounded of the enemy. Several of them suffered the amputation of their limbs, and the wounds of the others were treated in a skilful manner, and every attention was paid to them which our circumstances would allow. Five of them died of their wounds, and were committed to their watery graves. From the survivors we learned that the British commander had frequently expressed a desire to come in contact with a 'Yankee frigate,' during his voyage, that he might have a prize to carry to London. Poor fellow! he little thought of losing his ship and his life in an engagement with a ship so much inferior to his own—with an enemy upon whom he looked with so much contempt."

The loss of the English ship proved to have been very much greater than her opponent's. It is good for John Bull's pride to know that he has been well beaten sometimes; but Ebenezer, like a generous enemy, confesses that the *Protector* had the advantage of being better manned, though the other ship was larger. "Having no marines to use the musket, they fought with their guns alone; and as their ship lay much higher out of the water than ours, the greater part of their shot went over us, cutting our rigging and sails without injuring our men."

For his own share of the damage, our hero found himself

quite deaf, the result of loading and sponging so long among the roar of cannon between decks. It was nearly a week before his hearing was restored, and then but partially; he never entirely got over this deafness. As the ship needed a good deal of repairs after such a bout of mauling, and the wounded were suffering greatly, Captain Williams steered for Penobscot Bay, where he anchored for a time, sending the sick on shore to be housed by a friendly farmer. Here we learn, from an amusing anecdote, what good discipline was kept in the naval service of the States.

"A copper-coloured fellow, half Indian and half negro, had seen a fatted calf in the farmer's barn, which he coveted to such a degree as to induce him to make a desperate attempt to make it a prize. The graceless rascal found another of the crew, whose appetite for veal overcame what little moral sense he possessed, ready to second him in the undertaking. Late at night, after all hands had retired, Cramps, for that was the name of the principal adventurer, took a boat, went on shore, secured the calf, and returned to the ship without discovery. He came with great caution under the ship's bows, and hailed his fellow worker in iniquity, whom he expected to find ready with a rope to hoist the calf on board.

"It so happened that, just at this time, our first lieutenant, Mr. Little, had occasion to come on deck, and the fellow who had been watching for the arrival of Cramps, dodged out of sight and secreted himself. Cramps, mistaking the lieutenant for his coadjutor, hailed him in a low tone, requesting him to lower a rope as quick as possible. The lieutenant, suspecting some mischief, did as he was directed. Cramps soon fixed a noose round the calf's neck, and then cried out, 'Now haul away, blast your eyes! my back is almost broke with carrying the creature so far down to the boat.' The lieutenant obeyed, and a strong pull on his part, with some boosting from Cramps in the rear, soon brought the animal upon deck. Cramps immediately followed his prize, and found, to his no small consternation, not only the calf, but himself, in the powerful grasp of the lieutenant. The calf was alive and uninjured, although Cramps had carried him a considerable distance from the barn to the boat, and came very near choking him when hoisting him up the side of the ship.

"The calf enjoyed more comfortable quarters that night than

his captor ; for the latter was handcuffed, and secured below for farther punishment the next day. In the morning, the calf and the culprit were sent on shore, and, when landed, Cramps was ordered to shoulder the calf and march to the farmer, confess, and ask his forgiveness ; and then to return on board with the consolation that he should receive fifty lashes for his fault, and the assurance that he should be hung at the yard-arm if he was detected in such an undertaking again. The result of this expedition proved Cramps to be the greater calf of the two. The fifty lashes were remitted at the solicitation of the kind-hearted farmer."

Her repairs being completed, the *Protector* put to sea again, and in three or four weeks steered for home, provisions beginning to run short, and no more prizes coming her way. After falling in with a British frigate of superior force, to which she thought well to show her heels, she reached Boston safely, where all hands were paid off. But Ebenezer was well enough pleased with his first experience of a man-of-war to be ready to try again.

He found that his father had died during his absence, which was another reason against remaining at home to be a burden on the poor mother with her eight children. So, the *Protector* having been overhauled and revictualled, he entered on board her for a second cruise. She sailed at the end of October, returning first to her old cruising ground off the Banks of Newfoundland, then making for the West Indies, then trying the seaboard of the States. She took several prizes, and was once more making for home, with the cheering prospect of dividing a good haul of prize-money, when she unluckily caught a Tartar, or rather a couple of them, in the shape of English cruisers, which had been for some weeks on the look-out for this bold depredator on their shipping.

Two large ships were one morning observed, to the leeward, bearing down upon the *Protector*. Two of her prizes which she had in company were ordered to shift for themselves as best they could, while the American man-of-war crowded all sail and tried to make off from the strangers, who, though showing French colours, looked very suspicious from the first. About noon they were evidently gaining upon her fast. The captain called all hands aft and expressed his opinion that these were British men-of-war, and that his ship had little chance of

escape. A few days before he had fallen in with an American brig bound for Boston, with a quantity of specie on board. Her skipper, thinking this money would be safer in an armed vessel, had requested, as a favour, that it might be taken on board the *Protector*, a most unlucky precaution, as the event proved, for the brig after all got safe into port. Captain Williams now divided this money among his men for safe keeping—fifteen dollars to each—on condition that it should be given back if all should yet go well. Ebenezer, for his part, being cabin-steward by this time, invited about a dozen of his friends into the store-room, and helped them to make away with as much of the biscuits, cheese, and porter as possible, unwilling that such luxuries should fall into the mouths of the enemy. Then they went back on deck, after shaking hands as friends about to part and not knowing when they should meet again.

All doubt was now at an end: the chasing ships had exchanged their French colours for English ones, and turned out to be men-of-war, of forty and twenty-eight guns respectively. By sunset they had come up with the *Protector*, which seems to have been not much of a sailer; and placing themselves on either side of her, an eighteen-pound shot was sent over her deck, as earnest of what would follow if she did not surrender. To contend against such odds would have been madness, so down went the stars and stripes. The enemy's boats pulled alongside of the American ship, while her crew were hastily collecting their clothes and other belongings.

It was not among the virtues of English sailors to be particularly tender to the feelings of a beaten foe. On reaching the *Protector's* deck, the first thing the victors did was to set about kicking and striking everyone that came in their way, with a variety of opprobrious epithets to match; then they took to searching for plunder. The Americans were ordered to pass down into the boats, taking nothing with them; only a few, helped by the darkness, were able to smuggle along their bedding. These were lucky, for in their new quarters in the hold of the enemy's vessel they found nothing softer to lie upon than water casks and ballast, consisting of stones of all shapes and sizes, with a lump of pig-iron here and there by way of variety.

But first there was a ceremony of undressing to be gone through. One of the prisoners, an English sailor, it is said, had betrayed the secret of the concealed money, so they were all

paraded on the deck, orders being given to search them till the sum of fifteen dollars had been found upon each. This was no easy job ; some men had to be stripped quite naked before the money could be got. One had hidden his share so cleverly that the searchers were fairly baffled, and at last could do nothing but dismiss him into the hold with an angry kick behind. When it came to Ebenezer's turn he was taken by the collar, and the first shake brought fifteen dollars rolling out of his hat, whereupon he was passed on without further inquiry. But, in fact, being a favourite with his captain, he had got a double share to take care of, and he kept another fifteen dollars concealed in his shoes. A good many others, he says, had also contrived by various stratagems to retain part of the money, for dollars were quite plentiful among them for some time after their capture, and "proved a great convenience, as money generally does among friends or foes."

III.

WE are now going to read what is not to the credit of old England ; but it is wholesome for us to remember how far, with all her warlike glory of which we are so proud, she may have come short of the righteousness that exalteth a nation. We should not be ashamed to tell the truth, but sorry that it has to be told. Our boasted naval supremacy was maintained by a high-handed recklessness which cannot be justified ; and in this war, disgraceful enough in all ways, the treatment of American prisoners is an ugly blot upon our fame. How bitter should we be if we had the same story to tell of some other nation !

When the two ships anchored off Sandy Hook after their capture of the *Protector*, her crew were called up and made to pass in single file before the British officers, who picked out those of the prisoners whom they thought fit to claim as Englishmen and press for their own service. Sailors as usual were badly wanted in the royal navy, so every healthy, active looking man was accused of being an Englishman ; and it was useless for him and his comrades to deny and protest. Without law or gospel, as Ebenezer relates with just indignation, they thus forced many a young American into the enemy's service,

in which he might have to spend the best years of his life fighting against his own countrymen, or against nations with whom he had no quarrel, till perhaps he died in misery far from home, and his friends had never even the consolation of knowing what became of him. The press-gang in England was bad enough ; but to force men who hated us to fight our battles must be confessed barbarous.

About a third part of the *Protector's* crew was thus pressed ; the rest were put on board a small coasting sloop to be transferred to the prison ship *Jersey*. They had heard of the horrors of that "floating hell," as it was called, and the prospect filled them with dismay. To escape this hard fate at any risk, there was discussed among them the desperate project of rising upon their guard, seizing the sloop, and running her aground on the New Jersey shore. She was loaded with wood, so the deck would furnish them in a moment with logs and billets to serve for weapons. Had there been anyone among them capable of acting as leader, our hero thinks that such an attempt might have been successfully carried out ; but their officers being confined in the cabin, and no communication permitted between them and the men, this design fell through for want of that direction which is needed to inspire the thoughtless courage of sailors with confidence in themselves and their comrades.

With gloomy forebodings they came in sight of the *Jersey*, moored on the shallow shore of a desolate and dreary part of Long Island. She was an old seventy-four, now a decaying, dismantled hulk, whose very look was enough to make a sailor shudder. Her only spars were the bowsprit, a flagstaff at the stern, and a derrick, used for hoisting in supplies, which at first sight suggested a gallows. Her former ports were fastened up ; in their stead appeared rows of holes about two feet square, strongly grated with iron bars. She lay embedded in the mud, the tide not rising high enough to set her afloat ; and the water round her was foul with the dirt and garbage thrown daily overboard from this home of a thousand miserable men.

But her forbidding aspect without was nothing to the scene revealed within. Passing down the hatchway, Ebenezer found himself among a collection of the most wretched objects he had ever beheld in human form. Here were men, not long ago hearty, healthy sailors or farmers, now worn by sickness

to shadows of their former selves, lean from a scanty, unwholesome diet, covered with rags and filth, pining away in impure air, surrounded by all the ghastly horrors of contagious disease. The poor lad's heart sank within him at the thought that here he might have to linger out the morning of his life in a weary, degrading captivity.

Yet it seemed that there was a lower deep. The deck below was given up to such prisoners as were foreigners, whose condition is described as being even more pitiable and disgusting than that of the upper-deck's inhabitants. Many of these men had spent two years thus, and Ebenezer fancies that they had in a measure grown resigned to their situation. Their whole lives having been one scene of toil, hardship, and suffering, their feelings became blunted, and their dispositions soured, he says, assuring us rather too confidently that these more patient foreigners had no home to mourn for, no friends to lament their fate. He was better able to appreciate the sufferings of his own comrades, mostly active, restless young New Englanders fresh from decent households. He was soon to find how the despair and home-sickness of such men, brooding on what they were, and contrasting it with what they had been, might grow to a madness or a wasting melancholy, till often death came to end their misery—a death that appeared to have no other cause than a broken heart. And all this woe and loss in so many families—all this despair and rankling anger, because our king was foolish and our people ignorant!

No difference, we are told, was shown between officers and sailors taken as rebels; all were packed promiscuously together by the authorities, though a distinction became made by the prisoners of their own accord, allowing those who had been their officers to have the after part of the ship to themselves. Some of the superior officers, indeed, were sent to England, where any of them who could be identified as Englishmen had the comfort of looking forward to the penalties of treason.

On the day of their arrival, these newcomers were left to fast, the ship's routine not providing any allowance for them. They had, like the rest, to form themselves into messes of six, appointing one of their number to wait on the steward every morning and receive the rations of the whole mess. The bill of fare, which our hero remembered all his long life, was as

follows: Sunday and Thursday, one pound of biscuit, one pound of pork, and half a pint of peas. Monday and Friday, one pound of biscuit, one pint of oatmeal, and two ounces of butter. Tuesday and Saturday, one pound of biscuit, and two pounds of salt beef. Wednesday, a banyan day, one and a half pounds of flour, and two ounces of suet. Ebenezer has not so much complaint to make of the quantity, which he reckons as two-thirds of the usual rations of sailors in the navy; but on the quality of the provisions he is bitterly sarcastic. The mouldy biscuits, he says, had to be rapped on the deck to dislodge the worms from them. The pork was mottled, like fancy soap, and almost unfit to eat, yet, such as it was, they were cheated out of half their allowance, which we can well believe, for if pursers in the old days of the service had a bad reputation for slippery tricks, those in charge of prisoners were not likely to be over-scrupulous. The peas were generally damaged, and so badly cooked as to be "about as indigestible as grape-shot." The flour and oatmeal were often sour; the suet could be smelt half the length of the ship. The beef is described as of uncertain age and origin, of the colour of dark mahogany, hard enough to need a broad axe to cut across the grain, though it could be pulled into strings one way, like rope yarn; a streak of fat in it would have been a wonder for all the prisoners to stare at! It was so salt that he declares it became fresher for boiling in sea water.

Still worse was the cooking. It was hurriedly and often insufficiently done in the foul water drawn up from alongside of the ship, and boiled in coppers coated with verdigris; no wonder, then, disease was so rife on board that the *Jersey* had been moved to this lonely station for fear of spreading contagion on shore. No complaints were listened to: "take it or leave it," was the word; and the half-famished prisoners, so long as they remained in health, were found greedy to devour whatever they could get. Though so near the shore, they were given no vegetables to make this diet more wholesome. "Many a time since," says Ebenezer, "when I have seen, in the country, a large kettle of potatoes and pumpkins steaming over the fire to satisfy the appetites of a farmer's swine, I have thought of our destitute and starved condition, and what a luxury we should have considered the contents of that kettle on board the *Jersey*."

The lodging was of a piece with the fare. At sunset, the cry would be, "Down, rebels, down!" and the prisoners were driven below, the hatchways being fastened over them, to pass the night in darkness, echoing with sighs and groans, in stifling heat and fetid air. Luckily the grated openings were not filled with glass, and it was thought a privilege to sleep near them in hot weather. But even there sleep was made difficult by the vermin which swarmed below, and against which no attention to personal cleanliness could be a protection.

In the morning they were allowed to come on deck, parties being told off to bring up the hammocks and bedding for an airing, also the bodies of those who had died in the night. There were often a number of corpses to be disposed of with scant ceremony. If the dead man had owned a blanket, one of his comrades would be allowed to sew it round him; then, a rope being tied round its middle, the body was lowered into a boat and brought on shore, to be carried on a barrow to the place of interment. A party of prisoners would also be sent to dig a grave, but they were forced to perform their pious duty so hurriedly, that in a few days the rain might lay bare the corpse which had received this mockery of a burial. It seems that care was not even taken to keep an exact account of those on whom a nameless grave was so grudgingly bestowed, and whose bones could be seen whitening in the sun long after the war was ended—"a lasting memorial of British cruelty."

Can we wonder that the men who saw and suffered these things at our hands should bear all their lives, and hand down to their children, a bitter hatred against this harsh mother-country?—a hate the stronger because at the time it had to be nursed in silence! Every prisoner who survived the horrors of the *Jersey*, became ten times more an enemy of England. The desperation with which American sailors fought in this war bespoke their dread of such an ill-famed place of captivity. There were other prisons in which the Americans were treated with disgraceful harshness, but the *Jersey* seems to have been the worst of all. It is said that thousands of men—as many as eleven thousand, according to one estimate—died on board her during the war. When it was over, she lay deserted, everyone shunning her for fear of contagion. The worms soon destroyed her rotten planks, and she sank—would that all the bad memories of that time were thus buried in oblivion!

The crew of the *Jersey* consisted of about a dozen sailors, and as many invalid marines unfit for active service ; there was also a guard of some thirty soldiers relieved every week from the forces quartered on Long Island. The prisoners, at least a thousand strong, might perhaps at any time have found it possible, by acting boldly and in concert, to have taken possession of the ship ; but what could they do next ? The inhabitants of Long Island were not indeed savages, but mostly Tories, who would have helped to recapture the fugitives ; then severe punishment might be expected.

Nevertheless many attempts at escape were made by these men, ready to face death at once rather than endure such wretched captivity. Sometimes, in spite of all the vigilance used, they would get away without being missed by their guards, unable to keep due count of so many—sometimes starved deserters would be found lurking in the woods, and brought back by the loyal inhabitants before their absence had been noticed. What became of many others is unknown. When a few of the prisoners had agreed upon making off, they were likely to keep their plan secret, for fear of detection through too many or too indiscreet participators. One day Ebenezer's mess saw that all six men of the mess next them had disappeared. This set them thinking on means of doing the same thing themselves ; and before long, by watching other would-be fugitives, they found out how it might be done.

Under the forecastle there was a closet, known as the "round house," the door of which was supposed to be kept locked, but somebody had contrived to pick the lock without this being discovered. Here they must hide till all was quiet and dark, then slip overboard and reach the shore by swimming and wading, after which good luck would have to be their guide. They fixed on a night and made all the preparations they could, saving, no doubt, some part of their scanty meals. The evening having come, when the prisoners were ordered below, these six managed to slip away and get unobserved to the round house. There was only room for five of them, and hardly that ; the sixth man hid himself under a large tub that happened to be lying handy. The rest were packed together as close as they could stand, hardly daring to breathe for fear of detection, when the clatter of hundreds of men descending the hatchways had come to an end, and all was silent but for

the steady tramp of the sentry as he paced the deck overhead.

It was the rule for the ship's mate to search above decks after the prisoners had been secured for the night ; this duty, however, seems to have been looked on as a mere form and somewhat carelessly performed. But that night, as misfortune would have it, an unlucky Irishman, thinking to escape alone, had hidden himself in the coal-hole, and so badly that the mate on looking in caught sight of him, dark as it was, and soon had him out. This stirred up the suspicions of the officer, who is said also to have been rather drunk, and set him on making a more thorough investigation than usual. The half stifled occupants of the round house, puzzled and alarmed by the uproar that followed this discovery, could hear the mate's loud threats to search every hole and corner in the ship. Their suspense was soon over, at least. He came to the round house and asked a soldier for the key of it. The anxious men within had a gleam of hope when the soldier answered that there was no need of searching this place as it was kept constantly locked. But no matter ; the mate was bent on seeing for himself and sent for the key, while he stood outside with loaded pistols threatening, in his impatience, to fire through the boards.

A few whispered words passed between Ebenezer and his companions. A dozen armed men were waiting outside ; in a minute or two more they must be found out, then some fatal violence might be used. When the soldier came with the key and the door was found to be unlocked, the excited mate, with curses and threats of instant death, summoned anyone who might be inside to come out. For answer the door was suddenly flung open outwards, and five men burst forth in a body, knocking over the guard with a free use of their fists, and making a rush for the quarter deck. Ebenezer being in the rear got a cut in the side from a cutlass, the rest reached the quarter deck safely ; but the soldiers were so angry that it was all their superiors could do to keep them from falling on these unarmed men. Ebenezer says that they would have all been murdered if a woman, who happened to be on board, had not thrown herself between them and the guard, and by her outcry brought up the captain.

The man under the tub, too, was discovered and bayonneted ; it

is not known if he ever recovered from the wound. Then the six were ironed to a long bar, and left on the open deck all night under a guard, to reflect over their bitter disappointment. Though this was the middle of August, there came on a cold fog and rain; and our hero declares he never spent such a horrible night in his life. They were chilled almost to death, being able to keep heat enough in their bodies only by lying upon each other in turns. When released in the morning, their limbs were so stiff that they could hardly stand, till some of their comrades had helped them below, and wrapped them in blankets, and so after a time the circulation was duly restored. As further punishment, they had their rations, short enough already, reduced by one third for a month.

Some weeks later, another attempt was made with more success, though simple enough in its design. A prisoner came up on deck and entered into conversation with the single sentry—an unsuspicious Irishman—pretending to desire information as to how he could enter the king's service. All at once, as the soldier stood leaning carelessly on his musket, he was felled on the deck by a stunning blow. Some thirty prisoners, who had been waiting for this, ran up and jumped overboard. The guard, roused by the noise, came on deck, to find the sentry senseless and nothing to be seen of the fugitives but certain phosphorescent gleams in the water. Upon these they opened a random fire; then the boats were lowered, and picked up about half of the men, many of them wounded, while the rest made good their escape. Meanwhile the main body of the prisoners showed their knowledge of and interest in this outbreak by giving three hearty cheers below, for which exhibition of feeling they were duly punished by being put upon short allowance.

Then there was another escape which deserves to be related at length, being, as our hero says, perhaps unparalleled for coolness and audacity. "One pleasant morning, about ten o'clock, a boat came alongside, containing a number of gentlemen from New York, who came for the purpose of gratifying themselves with a sight of the miserable tenants of the prison-ship: influenced by the same kind of curiosity that induces some people to travel a great distance to witness an execution. The boat, which was a beautiful yawl, and sat like a swan upon the water, was manned by four oarsmen, with a man at the

helm. Considerable attention and respect was shown to the visitors, the ship's side being manned when they showed their intention of coming on board, and the usual naval courtesies extended. The gentlemen were soon on board ; and the crew of the yawl, having secured her to the fore-chains on the larboard side of the ship, were permitted to ascend the deck.

"A soldier as usual was pacing with a slow and measured tread the whole length of the deck, wheeling round with military precision when he arrived at the end of his walk ; and, whether upon this occasion any one interested in his movements had secretly slipped a guinea into his hand, not to *quicken*, but to retard his progress, was never known ; but it was evident to the prisoners that he had never occupied so much time before in measuring the distance with his back to the place where the yawl was fastened. At this time, there were sitting in the forecastle, apparently admiring the beautiful appearance of the yawl, four mates and a captain, who had been brought on board as prisoners a few days previous, taken in some vessel from a southern port. As soon as the sentry had passed these men, in his straight-forward march, they in a very quiet manner lowered themselves down into the yawl, cut the rope, and the four mates taking in hand the oars, while the captain managed the helm, in less time than I have taken to describe it, they were under full sweep from the ship. They plied the oars with such vigour, that every stroke they took seemed to take the boat out of the water. In the meantime, the sentry heard nothing and saw nothing of this transaction, till he had arrived at the end of his march, when, in wheeling slowly round, he could no longer affect ignorance, or avoid seeing that the boat was several times its length from the ship. He immediately fired ; but, whether he exercised his best skill as a marksman, or whether it was on account of the boat going ahead its whole length at every pull of the rowers, I could never exactly ascertain : but the ball fell harmless into the water. The report of the gun brought the whole guard out, who blazed away at the fugitives, without producing any diminution in the rapidity of their progress.

"By this time, the officers of the ship were on deck with their visitors ; and, while all were gazing with astonishment at the boldness and effrontery of the achievement, and the guard were firing as fast as they could load their guns, the captain in

the yawl left the helm, and standing erect in the stern, with his back to the *Jersey*, bending his body to a right angle, he exhibited the broadest part of himself to their view, and with a significant gesture directed their attention to it as a proper target for the exercise of their skill. This contemptuous defiance caused our captain to swell with rage ; and when the prisoners gave three cheers to the yawl's crew as expressive of their joy at their success, he ordered all of us to be driven below at the point of the bayonet, and there we were confined the remainder of the day."

After this, when visitors came on board, the prisoners were kept safe below decks. But in spite of every precaution, escapes went on ; and when a general muster was taken, nearly two hundred were found to have mysteriously disappeared. All the officers of the ship could do was to make amends for their past remissness by treating the remainder with increased rigour.

The veritable plague which found a congenial home in this ship took firmer hold : men died faster and faster, especially the younger ones, who proved more liable to contagion. The prisoners got a petition sent to General Washington asking for his interference in their favour ; and he procured for them some little improvement in their diet by threatening to treat British prisoners with similar severity by way of reprisal. This was all he could do. There were few British sailors in the hands of the rebels, and it was considered against the rule of such matters to exchange sailors for soldiers.

Time dragged on, bringing no hope for the sufferers of the *Jersey*. Their keepers kept them in ignorance of the progress of the war, giving them to suppose that it would soon be ended by the complete discomfiture of the rebels. Winter was at hand with miseries of another kind. The only prospect of relief held out to them was through enlisting in the king's service. Three hundred, indeed, picked out as the most likely-looking, were again forcibly pressed for the navy. Others, their spirits broken by captivity, were found willing to volunteer, welcoming any lot for a change. Some of these are said to have done so for no other reason than to get a chance of escape. Such was the case of our hero and some of his comrades. They resolved to enroll themselves in one of the regiments serving in the West India Islands, and soon found an opportunity.

An officer came on board to recruit men for the 88th Regiment, to be stationed at Kingston, in Jamaica. These prisoners, a dozen in number, had just been trying to chew a piece of beef too tough even for their well-tried teeth, when this officer addressed them with the usual flattering story of what they would gain by enlisting. "Abundance of good food, comfortable clothing, service easy, and the finest climate in the world, were temptations too great to be resisted by a set of miserable, half-starved, and almost naked wretches as we were, and who had already concluded to accept of the proposition even had it been made under circumstances less enticing. The recruiting officer presented his papers for our signature. We hesitated, we stared at each other, and felt that we were about to do a deed of which we were ashamed, and which we might regret. Again we heard the tempting offers, and again the assurance that we should not be called upon to fight against our Government or country; and with the hope that we should find an opportunity to desert, of which it was our firm intention to avail ourselves when offered—with such hopes, expectations, and motives, we signed the papers, and became soldiers in his majesty's service."

IV.

THE twelve American recruits, glad to take leave of their hateful prison-ship, were landed on Long Island, marched about a mile to a barn, and there quartered for the night. They had proposed to begin and end their military career by deserting that same night; but they found the barn surrounded by a strong guard, showing their zeal in the king's service to be quite well appreciated by the officers. Next morning, after a breakfast which to them was a real banquet, they were marched off again to the shore, still under a guard, which, for the look of the thing, was called an *escort*. It was plain they were treated as prisoners rather than soldiers; and when, on the way, they passed within sight of the gloomy hulk from which they had just been delivered, Ebenezer asserts that they wished themselves back on it, if this were to be all the good they got from a nominal freedom.

They were hurried on board a vessel only awaiting a favour-

able wind to sail for Jamaica. In a week or so she weighed anchor, and the poor fellows had to take what might be a last look at their native land. Their faint hope now was that in the course of the voyage they might be captured by some American privateer.

Then another chance of escape presented itself. They had in company a small swift-sailing schooner, on board of which the captain sometimes put twelve or fifteen of those sailors turned soldiers, and let her cruise a little on her own account. Just at the end of the voyage she made one prize of a French craft. The Americans, making the greater part of the schooner's crew, began to think of mastering her and running off to some Spanish or Portuguese island. But their shipmates being of all nations, it was necessary to use great caution in such consultations; and at the last moment the plan fell through, owing to the objections of one of those concerned, a Scotchman, who, there is reason to believe, played the traitor rather than the coward. They were now also running to the leeward, and in case of success, would have to beat up to the windward again, and come in danger of meeting English cruisers under the land. The attempt seemed too desperate to risk, and they reluctantly abandoned it.

Next day they reached Jamaica. Before they went on shore, the captain told the would-be mutineers that he knew all about their design to seize the schooner, and might have them tried for their lives by court-martial. But he proposed to take no notice of it, sending them away with some well-meant advice as to their future conduct; and they could not but be heartily grateful to him for his generous forbearance.

Under the charge of a sergeant, they were conducted to the barracks of their regiment, known as "Harmony Hall." Here now for a time they had no employment but being knocked into shape by the drill-sergeant, and keeping their new arms and equipments in order. It appeared to be the object of their officers to reconcile them to the service by making it as easy and agreeable as possible. So they were treated with some indulgence, and often allowed passes to visit the town or the beautiful country round Kingston. But our hero and some of the other Americans were not to be won over by such favours; the main use which they made of these passes was to seek out any possible means of escape.

It appeared to them quite practicable to get on board one of the English merchant-ships in the harbour, which were generally short of hands through the system of impressment for the navy, so that the skippers might well be willing to hide away one or two sailors till out at sea. Once in England, they could surely find some means of getting to France, and from thence return to their own country. So these men set themselves to make inquiries about the shipping, spending much of their leave in the taverns visited by sailors. In the course of their inquiries, Ebenezer and one of his comrades had nearly got into a bad scrape. They fell in with an English tar to whom they rather more plainly than prudently hinted their intentions. This sailor seemed inclined to be friendly and sociable, made no objections to drink freely at their expense, told them that his captain was in want of hands and would doubtless take them on board, and, in short, completely won their confidence. On his asking how they had got out of barracks, Ebenezer showed his pass, which their new acquaintance coolly put in his pocket.

"My friend," said Ebenezer, "I must have that paper, as we cannot return to our quarters without it." To their dismay the sailor replied:

"You had better be peaceable about it, for I mean to see your commanding officer."

Finding their confidence betrayed, the two comrades had nothing for it but to use violence. Ebenezer recovered his pass by force, knocking the man senseless with the butt-end of his bayonet. The noise of this scuffle brought in the landlord of the tavern and his wife, who sided with the soldiers, declaring the sailor to be a quarrelsome fellow, who had made a disturbance in the house once before. It was lucky for our friends that the good woman happened to be a bit of a termagant, for at her desire her husband kicked the man out of doors forthwith; and hurrying back to their quarters, they were fortunate enough to hear no more of him.

Soon after this narrow escape our hero had a stroke of luck. It being discovered that he could shave, he was appointed barber to the officers, and released from all other duty, that he might devote himself to this important branch of the service. He gave such satisfaction in shaving and powdering his dandy masters, that he became a favourite, and could get a

pass to go out almost as often as he liked, besides further indulgences not granted to his comrades.

But in spite of the easy life he now led, the lad could not forget that he was a prisoner among the enemies of his country, and was ready to run any risk in regaining freedom. He turned his privilege of going out of barracks to good account by reconnoitring the country, and thus preparing for an attempt at desertion which might seem desperate enough. He became acquainted with all the roads from Kingston as far as a fort about two miles off called Rock Fort. At a spot near this, known as "the Plum-tree," he found that a number of sentries were placed to catch deserters making for the interior. But once past them, what could prevent him from gaining the other side of the island?

Then the difficulty was to find confederates, for our hero's courage seems to have been of that stamp which is kept warm by contact with kindred spirits. - It was necessary to be very cautious in sounding his comrades; but he came to an understanding with five men in a position similar to his own, four Americans and an Irishman, who, being mechanics, had been released from their regular military duties, though none of them enjoyed the confidence of the officers so completely as Ebenezer. He was only nineteen years old, but he had thought so much over the question of escape, and had so well studied the neighbourhood, that he took the lead in the bold enterprise proposed by these six, to travel across the island on foot, trusting then to find means for escaping to Cuba. Two of the men, who were armourers, managed to get from the arsenal a pair of pistols and three swords. These, all the arms they could safely lay hands on, along with some clothes and a small stock of provisions, were hid in the hut of an old negro whom they had bribed to secrecy. It was not difficult to enlist negroes in any scheme against their oppressors, "the buckra men."

On the morning of the day fixed for their attempt, they got a warning: five deserters were brought back, having been stopped by the sentries at Rock Fort, and the commanding officer was heard to say that whatever might be these men's punishment, the next caught trying to desert should certainly be hanged. But our adventurers were not to be frightened from their purpose. Ebenezer, some little time before, had so recommended himself to the good graces of this commanding officer, by trim-

ming him for a ball, that in the fulness of satisfaction with his elegant appearance, he had given the young barber a general leave out of barracks till further orders. That afternoon he requested the favour of a pass for five of his comrades, to let them stay out with him till nine o'clock. The officer hesitated a moment, then signed the pass with the remark : " I believe I can trust you ; but remember that you must not come back without them."

This Ebenezer promised with an inward chuckle, meaning faithfully to keep his word, though hardly in the sense understood by the officer.

The six comrades then made for the negro's hut, and took the things they had left there. Unfortunately a danger presented itself at the outset. There had been a military funeral at Rock Fort that afternoon, and a number of soldiers who had been attending it were seen returning to their quarters. The bundles carried by these deserters might attract suspicion, so it was agreed among them to separate and meet again when the coast should be clear. Thus they escaped notice ; but on rejoining each other as arranged, one was found missing. The rest looked all about for him, but in vain. As it was now past eight o'clock, and they knew that if they did not return at nine a party would be sent in search of them, they had to hurry on, leaving their unlucky companion to shift for himself. Perhaps, indeed, giving way to fear, he had gone back to inform against them. But as the stupid fellow had been drinking during the afternoon, the probability was that he had lain down somewhere and fallen asleep. Anyhow, they durst not wait for him, and Ebenezer could never learn what was his fate.

" We pushed rapidly forward till we had got about a mile from Kingston, when we entered a small piece of wood-land, and divested ourselves of our uniform, which we had worn with much reluctance, and had never ceased to regret having exposed ourselves to the necessity of putting on ; clothed ourselves in the sailor garments, which we had taken care to provide ; cut the white binding from our hats ; and were soon metamorphosed into much better sailors than we had ever been soldiers.

" Having loaded our pistols, we again proceeded. We had advanced but a few rods, when we met a sergeant, belonging to a regiment called the Liverpool Blues, who had been to Rock

Fort to see some of his acquaintance, and was then upon his return. It was near the time for stationing the guard, as usual, at the place called the 'Plum-tree.' The sergeant hailed us with, 'Where are you bound, my lads?' We answered, 'To Rock Fort.' He replied, 'I have just come from there, and found all well: how goes on the recruiting at New-York? and what is the news?'

"A ship had arrived the day previous from New-York, and he supposed that we were some of the recruits that she had brought over. We perceived his mistake, and adapted our answers to his questions, so as to encourage his delusions. We told him that the recruiting went on bravely, and we were going to join our regiment at Rock Fort. The fellow seemed to be in a very happy mood, and immediately declared his intention of turning back to show us the way to the fort. Our situation was rendered very embarrassing by this kind offer; and to refuse, we feared, would excite suspicion. Our generous guide thought he was doing us service, when he was leading us directly to destruction; and the idea of killing him, while he imagined that he was performing a good service for us, was very unpleasant; but it was our only alternative. In a few moments the deed would have been done; self-preservation made it necessary: but, fortunately for the poor fellow, and much to our satisfaction, he suddenly recollected that his pass required him to be back to Kingston by nine o'clock, and, bidding us good-night, and telling us that we could not miss the way, he left us, and pursued his route to Kingston at a rapid pace."

Go forward the five comrades must, at any risk, for to go back now would be death. This encounter made it all the more certain that they should be pursued before morning; and they felt the importance of getting as far as possible from Kingston during the night. About half a mile further on they met an old negro, who hailed them with: "Where be you going, massa buckra men? There be a plenty of soldiers a little way ahead; they will take you up and put you on board of man-of-war." He took them for sailors deserting from their ship. But with deserters, as Ebenezer had found, the negroes seldom failed to feel sympathy, "seeing some resemblance between their own degraded condition and that of the miserable military and naval slaves of British despotism." They were all like schoolboys making common cause against a harsh master. For a dollar

the old fellow readily agreed to guide the fugitives by a path through the woods, so as to bring them past the guard at the "Plum-tree." They were putting their lives in this man's hands, but he did not deceive them. Leading them about a mile, till they were beyond the military post, he gave them directions for their future course, and took leave with the most solemn assurances that he would never inform against them.

This anxious journey was not made without further alarms and adventures, the full account of which should not be lost.

"About midnight, we came to one of the many rivulets with which Jamaica abounds. As we were unable to determine what its width or depth was in the darkness, it was necessary to proceed with caution. The tallest of our party was sent forward to try to wade across. The rest followed in single file, according to our respective heights; I, being the shortest, brought up the rear. Holding our arms and provisions and part of our clothing above our heads, we soon arrived on the opposite shore. When I was in the middle of the river, I found the water up to my chin, and was fearful at one time that I should be obliged to abandon my bundle, and resort to swimming. We travelled in our wet clothes the remainder of the night, and, towards day-light, we looked round for some retired spot, where we could secrete ourselves during the day, as we considered that it would expose us to great hazard, if not to certain detection, to travel by daylight at so little distance from Kingston as we then were. We soon found a secluded spot on the side of a hill thickly set with brush-wood, well calculated for concealing us from the view of any who might pass that way.

"In the course of the forenoon we saw, from our place of concealment, a number of negroes pass by, carrying to the market at Kingston various articles of country produce upon their heads in baskets. We had provided for our sustenance a small quantity of bread and dried herring, sufficient to last three days, the time we thought requisite to travel across the island: of this provision we eat sparingly, but suffered much from want of water, as we were afraid of being seen if we ventured from our hiding-place till night, when we cautiously, one at a time, crept down to the foot of the hill, and quenched our thirst from a small rivulet.

"As soon as it was dark enough to prevent discovery, we

left our place of concealment, and proceeded on our second night's journey. We had been exposed to considerable danger the preceding night and day, and had suffered much from hunger and from thirst: our spirits were depressed, and we experienced the wearisomeness that arises from a want of sleep. Gloomy forebodings assailed us; and we moved on in melancholy silence. After having travelled three or four hours, we unexpectedly found ourselves near a hut, and were alarmed at hearing a negro female voice exclaim, 'Here come a whole parcel of buckra man.' We immediately started from the spot, and proceeded with all practicable speed till we had travelled three or four miles, when we sat down to rest, and to refresh ourselves with some of our bread and dried herring.

"After we had rested about half an hour, we renewed our journey with all the speed we could exercise; and proceeded without interruption till daylight approached, when we thought it necessary to find a place of concealment during the day. We entered the woods at a short distance from the road, where we spent the day, partially satisfying our hunger with a scanty portion of bread and herring, and some berries, which we found, of various kinds; and amusing ourselves with the relation of the dangers we had passed through, and speculations upon the nature of those which we might be called upon to encounter. The day passed without any alarm, and, as night approached, we prepared to recommence our journey. Soon after dark, we issued from the woods, entered upon the road, and proceeded for several hours without meeting with anything to molest or make us afraid. We occasionally rested, eat sparingly of our nearly-exhausted stores, and drank water when we could find it, and travelled without interruption till morning. A place for concealment during the day was again selected; and, as we had slept but little since we left Kingston, we concluded to get all the rest we could, and spent the greater part of the day in sleep, each one of us in succession keeping watch while the others slept. After several hours' rest, we found ourselves considerably refreshed; and as our small stock of provisions was nearly exhausted, and we had consumed nearly the time we had anticipated would be required to arrive on the opposite side of the island; we concluded that we would venture to travel by daylight.

"We took the precaution to divide our party, three taking one

side of the road, a little in advance, and two on the other side ; keeping a vigilant look-out in every direction. One of our men in advance gave notice, some time in the forenoon, that he discovered an object at a distance apparently approaching. We thought it prudent to retire from the road to a neighbouring thicket, till we could ascertain what the object was. It proved to be a gentleman on horseback, who, by his dress, appeared to be an officer of high rank, followed by a servant.

"The officer wore a large gold-laced three-cornered hat, and was richly dressed : both he and his servant were well armed. As soon as they had passed and were out of sight, we left our retreat with the intention of proceeding ; but, finding ourselves in need of more rest, we penetrated farther into the woods to find a place of repose.

"Our strength began to fail for want of food, and we found it necessary to take more frequent opportunities for rest and sleep. We gathered a few berries, and, having enjoyed a few hours of uninterrupted sleep, we felt refreshed, and returned to the road to pursue our journey. We travelled without interruption till about three o'clock in the afternoon, and, while ascending a hill, we were alarmed by hearing the sound of voices. We stopped, and collected together to consult upon what course to adopt. In a few moments, we saw coming over the hill three stout negroes, armed with muskets, which they immediately presented to us, and ordered us to stop.

"Our arms, as I have formerly observed, consisted of two pistols and three swords : upon the pistols we could place but little dependence, as they were not in good order ; and the swords were concealed under our clothes : to attempt to draw them out would have caused the negroes instantly to fire upon us. They were about ten rods before us, and stood in the attitude of taking a deliberate aim at us. To run would be certain death to some of us ; we therefore saw no alternative but to advance. One of our number, a man named Jones, a tall, powerful fellow, took a paper from his pocket, and holding it up before him, advanced with great apparent confidence in his manner, and the rest of us imitated his example. As we approached, Jones held out the paper to one of them, telling him that it was our pass, giving us authority to travel across the island. The negroes, as we very well knew, were unable to read ; it was therefore immaterial what was written upon the

paper—I believe it was an old letter—as manuscript or print was entirely beyond their comprehension. While we were advancing, we had time to confer with each other ; and the circumstances of the moment, the critical situation in which we were placed, naturally led our minds to one conclusion, to obtain the consent of the negroes that we might pursue our journey ; but if they opposed our progress, to resort to violence, if we perished in the attempt.

“ There was something very exciting to our feelings in marching up to the muzzles of these fellows’ guns ; to have our progress interrupted when we were, as we supposed, so near the end of our journey. Our sufferings had made us somewhat savage in our feelings ; and we marched up to them with that determination of purpose which desperate men have resolved upon, when life, liberty, and everything they value is at stake : all depended upon prompt and decisive action.

“ This was a fearful moment. The negroes stood in a row, their muskets still presented, but their attention was principally directed to the paper which Jones held before them ; while our eyes were constantly fixed upon them, anxiously watching their motions, and designing to disarm them as soon as a favourable opportunity should be offered.

“ The negroes were large and powerful men, while we, though we outnumbered them, were worn down by our long march, and enfeebled by hunger. In physical power we were greatly their inferiors. But the desperate circumstances in which we were placed inspired us with uncommon courage, and gave us an unnatural degree of strength.

“ We advanced steadily forward, shoulder to shoulder, till the breasts of three of us were within a few inches of the muzzles of their guns. Jones reached forward and handed the paper to one of the negroes. He took it, and, having turned it round several times and examined both sides, and finding himself not much the wiser for it, shook his head and said, ‘ We must stop you.’ The expression of his countenance, the doubts which were manifested in his manner of receiving the paper, convinced us that all hope of deceiving or conciliating them was at an end.

“ Their muskets were still presented, their fingers upon the triggers. An awful pause of a moment ensued, when we made a sudden and desperate spring forward, and seized their muskets :

our attack was so unexpected, that we wrenched them from their hands before they were aware of our intention. The negro, whom I attacked, fired just as I seized his gun, but I had fortunately turned the direction of it, and the ball inflicted a slight wound upon my side, the scar of which remains to this day. This was the only gun that was discharged during this dreadful encounter. As soon as it was in my possession, I exercised all my strength, more than I thought I possessed, and gave him a tremendous blow over the head with the breech, which brought him to the ground, from which he never rose. I had no sooner accomplished my work, when I found my companions had been equally active, and had despatched the other two negroes in the same space of time. None of our party received any injury but myself, and my wound I considered as trifling.

“The report of the gun we were fearful would alarm some of our enemies’ comrades, who might be in the vicinity, and bring them to the spot. We accordingly dragged the bodies to a considerable distance into the woods, where we buried them under a quantity of leaves and brush. In their pockets we found a few biscuits, which were very acceptable to us in our famished condition.”

These negroes were Maroons, or “Cudjoe men,” as they were sometimes called from the name of their most celebrated chief, a race descended from escaped slaves, who inherited the mountainous interior of Jamaica, and gave much trouble to the settlers till the end of last century, when they were finally subdued. Indians and bloodhounds had been imported into the island to hunt them down; but their wild free life, and the almost impenetrable retreats afforded them by the nature of the country, made them such formidable enemies that for a century and a half they played in the history of Jamaica much the same part as the Red Indians in the American backwoods. At this time they were at peace with the English, and made themselves very useful in intercepting run-away slaves and deserters, for each of whom, when brought back, they received a fixed reward. Our fugitives had been all along in dread of meeting with some of these savage sentinels, to avoid whom they had taken circuitous paths through the woods, having no guide but an imperfect compass, and were thus five days in crossing the island, a distance of only forty or fifty miles.

It was as well for them that they had not kept to any of the three roads from Kingston, for the Cudjoe men's huts lay beside these roads, along which parties of soldiers had also been sent after them, as Ebenezer Fox learned some years later, when he met with an old acquaintance named Hunt, who had been brought to Kingston as a prisoner the very day after his escape. He knew of our hero's being there, and on making inquiries after him, was told by the serjeant of the guard: "Fox was fool enough to run off last night with five others; he had no military duty to perform; all he had to do was to shave and dress the officers, and he spent most of the time in walking about the streets. I suppose they think they will show us a Yankee trick; but they will find themselves mistaken, for there are three parties out after them, one on each road, and they had orders to bring them back before night, dead or alive."

But the five deserters, as we know, were now almost beyond pursuit. Exhausted by the fatigue and excitement of their struggle with the negroes, they lay down to sleep. Through the day Ebenezer awoke to get another fright. He saw an enormous serpent, with its head, as appeared to him, raised several feet from the ground, gloating with distended jaws over the sleepers. So formidable a monster was it, that he took it for nothing less than the "old serpent" in person. But as he hastily aroused his comrades, the serpent, showing itself more frightened than they were, glided so rapidly away among the bushes that Ebenezer could not tell its length, though it seemed to him as thick as a man's body.

Darkness being now at hand, they resumed their journey, armed with a musket taken from the Cudjoe men. They felt sure they must by this time have nearly crossed the island; and daybreak brought them to the top of a hill from which they saw the sea at their feet. Ignorant, no doubt, of a more exact parallel to their situation in the works of Xenophon, our hero expresses an opinion that Columbus and his crew could not have felt more hearty joy when they first caught sight of the New World.

V.

THE five comrades had hardly been able to refrain from bursting into a cheer at the sight of their familiar element, which was to waft them away from the shores of captivity; but, after all, this

would be holloaing before they were out of the wood. When the fog cleared away, Cuba could be made out against the horizon, but between them and it still lay some thirty leagues of ocean. They had no very clear notion how to proceed next. Their hope had been to find some merchant vessel on the coast, which would take them without asking too many questions, seeing that sailors were scarce in that part of the world.

In the meanwhile they retired to the woods, and spent most of the day in sleeping off their fatigue. Several times venturing to take a peep out, they saw negroes moving about, but were not observed by any of them. It is mentioned as the climax of suffering for these free-born Americans that, while wandering in the woods like wild beasts, shunning the light of day, they were even "afraid of the sight of a negro."

Before sunset, having eaten the last of the biscuit, they left their hiding-place and made cautiously towards the shore, keeping as much as possible in shelter of the bushes. They saw several huts scattered along the coast, but not a sail whitened the smooth surface of the sea. Dejected and undecided, they turned back. It was clear they could not remain long where they were without starving or being detected. What were they to do? Once more they stole out to reconnoitre. This time, to their joy, they saw a small sail-boat beating in towards them—here was a means of escape which Providence seemed to be throwing in their way!

Hastily retreating into the bushes to take counsel, like true American citizens, they formed themselves into a committee, appointed a moderator, and proceeded to discuss the question of seizing this boat and making off with it to Cuba. But they had no time to spare for speeches for and against: the proposal was at once put to the vote and carried unanimously.

"We left our council place, and crept cautiously down to the shore, keeping concealed as much as possible behind the bushes, till we arrived near to the point at which we thought the boat was steering. As she was beating against the wind, we concluded, if the man at the helm could be brought down, the boat would luff, which would bring her near the shore, when we were immediately to spring on board. Jones, being the best marksman, took the musket, and seeing that it was well loaded and primed, crept as close to the edge of the shore as he could without being discovered by the crew, and lay down,

to wait for a good opportunity to fire at the man at the helm. The rest of us kept as near to him as possible.

"Every circumstance seemed to favour our design. The negroes were all in their huts, and everything around was quiet and still. The boat soon approached near enough for Jones to take a sure aim ; and we scarcely breathed as we lay extended on the ground, waiting for him to perform the duty assigned him. In a few moments, bang went the gun, and down went the negro from the helm into the bottom of the boat ; and, as we had anticipated, the helm being abandoned, the boat luffed up in the wind and was brought close to the shore, which was bold, and the water deep enough to float her. The instant the gun was fired, we were upon our feet, and the next moment up to our waists in the water alongside of the boat.

"No time was lost in shoving her about, and getting her bows from the land. There was a fresh breeze from the shore ; the sails filled ; and the boat was soon under a brisk head way. I remained in the water the last, and, as I attempted to get on board, my hands slipped from my hold on the gunwale, and I fell into the water. I heard an exclamation, ' Good God ! Fox is lost ! ' from one of our party ; but, as the boat swept by me, I caught with my middle finger in the noose of a rope that hung over the stern, and was seized by the cape of my jacket and drawn into the boat by the powerful arm of Jones, who was managing the helm. All that I have described was apparently the work of a moment. Never did men use greater exertions than we did at this time.

"The report of Jones's gun alarmed the negroes, and brought them from their huts in all directions down to the shore, armed with muskets and clubs, and full of rage and fury. They waded out after us up to their chins in the water, and fired volley after volley as fast as they could load. The bullets fell thickly around us, but fortunately none of us were injured. Our progress was so rapid, that we were soon out of reach of their shot ; but, as soon as we could find time, we loaded our gun and gave one parting salute.

"Our attention was next directed to the disposal of the crew of the boat we had captured, consisting of three men and a boy. As soon as we sprang into the boat, they fled with terror and amazement into a sort of cabin in the bow, where they still remained. It was no wonder that they were frightened,

attacked so suddenly by an enemy, who, as it seemed to them, had arisen all at once from the bowels of the earth or the depths of the ocean.

"Whether the head of the negro at the helm was bullet-proof, or whether the ball approached so near to it as to frighten him into insensibility, we never knew; but we found him prostrate in the bottom of the boat, when we entered it, apparently dead; but, to our gratification, we soon found that he was alive, and not a curl of his wool discomposed. He was soon upon his knees, supplicating mercy, in which attitude and tone he was followed by the rest of the crew as we called them from their hiding-place. Had we been disposed to do an unjust action, we had an opportunity of realizing a considerable sum of money, by carrying them to Cuba and selling them for slaves. The temptation was great to men destitute of funds as we were; but our moral sense overcame the temptation, and we gave them their choice to proceed with us on our voyage, or expose themselves to the hazard of drowning by attempting to swim ashore. They accepted the latter proposition with much gratitude, and were soon swimming lustily for the shore, from which we were at the distance of more than a mile, where we saw them all safely arrive.

"We felt some anxiety respecting the ability of the boy to swim so far; but, as he was desirous of going with them, two of our men took him by his arms and legs, and gave him a regular yo-hoi-ho heave; and we had the satisfaction of seeing the little fellow shaking the water from his curly pate upon the shore before his companions had landed."

Luckily there was a fresh breeze blowing off shore, which, as they had calculated, carried the fugitives rapidly out to sea. They found the boat in good order and supplied with plenty of provisions, on which they made their first hearty meal for five days. Elated by such good fortune, they watched the landing of the crew whom they had so unceremoniously turned out, and saw other negroes running up and crowding round them to hear their account of this strange proceeding. There was still the danger of pursuit to cause anxiety. Presently, though it was almost dark, they could make out that all the negroes started off at full speed for a point of land under which a schooner was riding at anchor. They even saw, or their fears let them imagine they saw, the axe that hastily cut away her moorings.

A little more and she was under weigh, crowding all sail and bearing down so as to cut them off.

But now the darkness came just in time to hide their little craft, while the schooner, being so much larger, was visible to them long after they had become indistinguishable from her deck. Observing the course she took, they thought the best way of avoiding her would be to turn back and stand in for the shore. When the schooner had gone well past them, these cute Yankees once more put about and made for Cuba. Through the day they had taken the bearings of that island from Jamaica, so by the aid of their compass they were able to steer a straight course. Once through the night they were alarmed by a sound like that of voices, and thought they saw the schooner ; but, in any case, she could not discover them.

They made a rapid passage, and, when morning broke, found the welcome shore in sight. Before long the schooner also became visible at some distance. She was steering for Jamaica, having apparently given up the chase ; now she altered her course and bore down upon them. But they were not afraid of her, for they felt sure of being able to reach land before she could overhaul them. Her people soon came to the same conclusion, and after a few harmless shots from a swivel gun, answered by the boat's crew with defiant discharges of their musket, she put about again, and "left us alone in our glory."

As they approached the shore, they saw several men running down and making signs for them not to land at that point, where, indeed, the heavy surf would have made it dangerous. So they kept off, went round a point of land to the leeward, and lay-to till four or five Spaniards came off to them in a small boat. The two parties did not know a word of each other's language ; but by gesticulations and repetition of the words "America," "Jamaica," "Kingston," etc., our friends managed to give the strangers some notion of their circumstances. "They saw that we were in distress, and probably were not unwilling to appropriate our boat to their use."

The weary and hungry-looking voyagers were taken on shore, carried to a hut, regaled with a plentiful supply of pork, peas, and beans, then left alone to the most refreshing sleep, as Ebenezer thinks, which he ever enjoyed. No more British tyranny, no more fear of pursuit ; they awoke to know themselves free !

In the afternoon, on waking up, they found quite a crowd of Spaniards curious to see them ; and after a long conversation by signs, it appeared, to their complete satisfaction, that these new acquaintances, perhaps looking on them with a certain degree of suspicion, were willing to help them away from the island. In short, a passage was taken for them on board a small lugger sailing that evening for St. Domingo, and, after three or four days, she anchored in the very port to which our hero had made his first voyage as a cabin-boy.

Their joy was complete when, in this harbour of Cape François, they saw the stripes and stars floating over the frigate *Flora*. When they found themselves holding up their heads among their own countrymen, upon the deck of an American ship, they could hardly realize that they were the same men who, a few days before, had been hungrily slinking through the woods of Jamaica, dogged by dread of the lash and the gallows.

The captain received them kindly, and offered to enroll them among his crew. But, as the *Flora* was bound in the first place for France, Ebenezer was the only one of the party who cared to accept this offer. His comrades preferred to look out for a merchant-ship which would take them sooner home. As for our hero, not only had he a mind to see foreign countries, as well as thinking himself safer on board a man-of-war, but he honestly confesses that "I had not yet rested long enough after my sufferings to cultivate the Christian spirit of *forgiveness to my enemies*." He rather hoped for an action in which he might help to pay off some of the old scores that he owed the British.

So, after a farewell supper to take leave of his companions, whom he never saw or heard of again, he once more entered the naval service of his country. Before the *Flora* sailed, however, he had another mishap, this time at the hands of professed friends and allies. One Sunday, being on shore with three or four of his comrades, they were all seized by a press-gang of Frenchmen, who hurried them off on board a French seventy-four. It was to no purpose that they protested, informing the captain they belonged to the *Flora*. His reply was that being in want of hands, he meant to keep them, and that they would receive as good pay and treatment on board his ship as on their own.

This was not any consolation to the outraged Americans, imprisoned thus in sight of their own ship, but unable to hold any communication with her. "We knew that the combined fleet was to sail in a few days; and although we had no objections to fighting the British, yet we had some choice as respected the company we fought in, and had but little desire to obey the orders of the French officers or to mingle our blood with that of their crew." So Ebenezer felt almost as anxious to get away from this involuntary service as he had been from that of the British at Kingston.

He being the only one of the impressed party who could swim, it was proposed that he should drop overboard in the darkness and make for the *Flora*, which lay about a quarter of a mile off. The great fear would be the sharks; but after a little urging and flattery from his companions, he consented to run the risk. Late one night he stole on deck, where the sentry showed the good taste of a Frenchman in being fast asleep. Ebenezer's task then was simple. He took off his jacket, slid quietly down the cable, and struck out for his own ship, where, it would seem, he found as bad watch kept as on board the Frenchman.

"Of all the dangers to which I had been exposed in the course of my adventures, I consider this the greatest. The horror of mind I experienced whilst swimming is indescribable. My agitation was so great, that I wonder that I did not sink through fear of being devoured. I imagined a shark at my feet every time I threw them out. I exerted myself with so much vigour, that in a very short time I was alongside of the *Flora*, but in so exhausted a state, that I could hardly raise myself over the side of the boat which floated alongside of the ship. I threw myself into the bottom, from which I was scarcely able to move for some time.

"After I had recovered a sufficient degree of strength, I ascended the side of the ship, and, finding no one on deck, I lay down in my wet clothes, and putting my hat under my head, slept soundly all night.

"When I awoke in the morning, I found that I was unable to move in consequence of my clothes adhering to the pitch, which the heat of the climate caused to ooze from the seams in the deck. By using considerable exertion, and rolling one way and the other, I at length liberated myself from my con-

finement, and stood erect once more on the deck of an American ship.

"I immediately communicated to Captain Johnson the cause of my absence and the situation of my companions, and their great desire to be again on board of his ship, and the hazardous undertaking I had accomplished to give him information of the circumstances. Captain Johnson immediately sent an officer with his boat, and demanded the release of his men. The captain of the French seventy-four gave them up and made many apologies, in the polite manner of a Frenchman, for 'the mistake that was made in impressing his friends the Americans.'"

So all was well that ended well; but this is a curious illustration of the free-and-easy way in which other captains, besides British ones, thought themselves able to deal with that scarce article, "hands."

About the middle of May, 1782, the *Flora* sailed for France. After taking two British ships on the way, she was discharged at Bordeaux, and laid up for nine months, waiting for instructions from home for a fresh cruise, in which expectations Ebenezer remained idle on board at small wages. But when, next spring, news did come from America, it was that Great Britain had at last acknowledged the independence of the United States. This peace was a bad business for the American sailors in foreign ports, as only a small number of them would now be needed to navigate homeward-bound ships, and the rest were destitute of means for returning to their native country. Our hero, however, was fortunate in getting a berth on board a brig bound for Boston; and though he would willingly have had some fresh chance of winning glory and prize-money, he was not sorry to see the friends from whom he had so long been separated and the shores of Massachusetts. At this point his simple narrative takes a higher flight, as he tries to express his sentiments.

"After all my wanderings, I found that I coveted rest, in my dear native land, more than all other things. In the morning of life, as I then was, full of health and strength and buoyant spirits, the idea of once more seeing home gave so much animation to my feelings, that I was enabled to perform my duties with a degree of alacrity scarcely equalled by any of the crew. Every little service I could perform was a pleasure to

me, as I was conscious that it helped to forward my onward course to the object of all my wishes—HOME."

"There is a spot of earth supremely blest,
A dearer, sweeter spot than all the rest,
Where man, creation's tyrant, casts aside
His sword and sceptre, pageantry and pride.
Here woman reigns; the mother, daughter, wife,
Strew with fresh flowers the narrow path of life.
Where shall that land, that spot of earth be found?
Art thou a man? a patriot? look around:
Oh, thou shalt find, howe'er thy footsteps roam,
That land *THY COUNTRY*, and that spot *THY HOME*."

The voyage was a pleasant and uneventful one. Nothing remarkable happened till, on approaching the American coast, they fell in with several British transports carrying troops back to England. Ebenezer saw the decks covered with the hated red coats, who for their part had to see the once despised stars and stripes flying jauntily on this brig without being able to fire a shot at it. Her captain hailed the transports through his speaking-trumpet, but they sulkily vouchsafed no answer, whereupon the irate skipper said good-bye to them in a style that was not blessing, and bellowed out: "We neither love you nor fear you!" Too long was this the motto of the sturdy young Republic thus roughly weaned from her mother country!

Ebenezer landed at Boston in May, 1783, after an absence of about three years. So changed was he by time, hardship, and exposure to various climates, that his own mother did not know him, and he was able to play upon the old lady's feelings for a time by pretending to be a shipmate who had met her son in some foreign port. But when his impatience could no longer restrain him from disclosing himself, he had no reason to complain of her joyful and thankful welcome. He learned now, also, a fact highly gratifying to him, that his friends at home, on hearing of his situation, had made a subscription to purchase his discharge from the British army, which, as we know, he had managed to get for himself in a cheaper way.

All this time, while playing his part as a sailor, soldier, and adventurer, our hero had been in the eye of the law a barber's apprentice. His old master now came forward to claim the prize money due to his apprentice; and Ebenezer returned to Mr. Bosson's service, remaining quietly with him till the age of twenty-one, when he set up in business for himself. After a

time he left this trade to keep a crockery, glass, and hardware store. He must have passed for a respectable citizen, since, in 1831, he was appointed postmaster at his native place. A few years later, finding his infirmities increase upon him, especially the deafness which he had as a souvenir of his first naval action, he thought it time to retire, and "ride at anchor the remainder of my days."

He lived, nevertheless, to the age of eighty, retaining full possession of his mental faculties even on his death-bed. In the course of a long life, he had so often to tell the story of his youthful adventures, that he was in no danger of forgetting them; and at last, in his old age, he undertook to set them down on paper for the amusement of his grandchildren. Though seventy-five years old when he thus turned author, the grandfather was an earlier riser than the rest of the family, and at breakfast on winter mornings used to tell them that he had written several pages before any of them were awake. As he went on, one circumstance after another reviving in his memory, the manuscript grew beyond his original intentions, and it gave so much satisfaction to the home circle and his friends, that he was persuaded to publish it for the entertainment of the rising generation, who might find there, indeed, something beyond entertainment, an inspiring memorial of what toils and sufferings had gone to the foundation of their proud Republic. And now that all the ill-feeling of that long struggle, let us hope, has died away, we Britishers, too, though we play such an unfavourable part in his youthful reminiscences, must find hardly less interest in this story of the "Revolutionary Adventures of Ebenezer Fox."





A MYSTERIOUS BOY.

I.

SOME persons, we know, achieve greatness ; others have greatness thrust upon them ; but it is not easy to say which of these fortunes was that of our present hero. He certainly had an experience of life as singular as it was short, and while still in his teens gave rise to an amount of mystery and controversy which in his day raised him almost to the rank of an historical personage. This once celebrated youth, Kaspar Hauser by name, is looked upon, according to one view, as a nineteenth century edition of the unknown "Man with the Iron Mask ;" according to the other, his story rather furnishes a juvenile version of the great Tichborne Claimant case, though, in fact, he claimed nothing definitely except to have been ill-used in the strangest and cruellest manner.

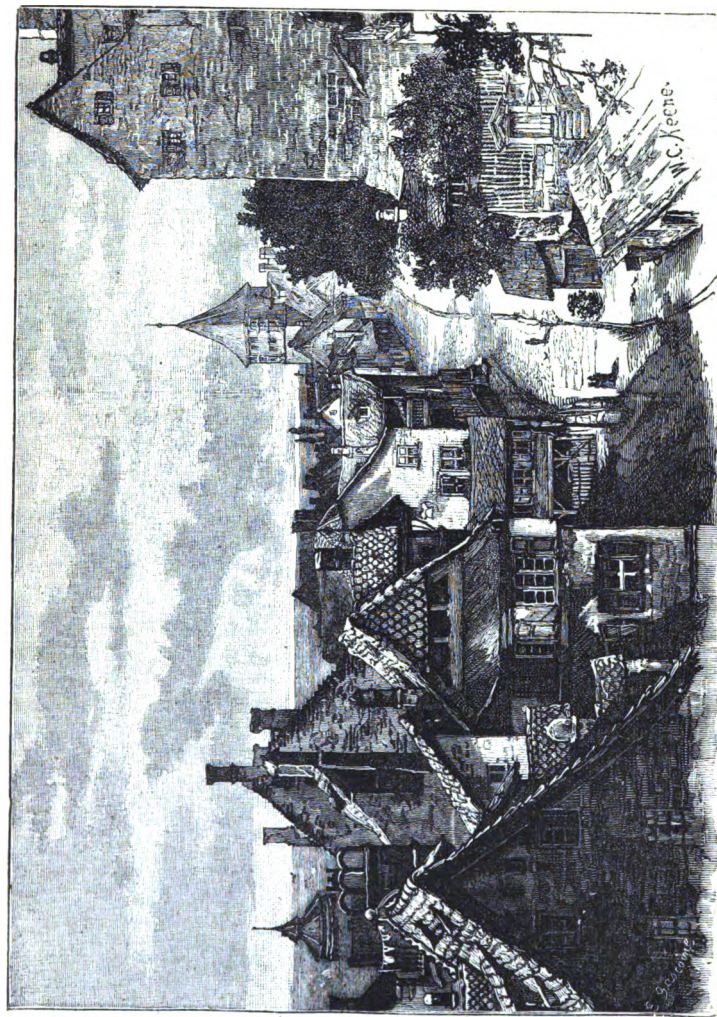
The scene is an unfrequented street of the quaint old Bavarian city of Nuremberg, so famous to tourists for its specimens of mediæval architecture ; the time, Whit-Monday evening, 1828, one of the chief holidays of German life, when people of all classes sally out to enjoy themselves among the buds and blossoms of May. Enter two citizens, shoemakers by trade, and to them a queer-looking lad in the dress of a peasant, who seemed to be staring about him like any other plough-boy out for the day in a large city. They understood him in a clownish fashion to ask for "New Gate Street," and were about to direct him there, when he pulled a large letter

from his jacket pocket and handed it to one of them without a word. It was addressed, with the usual cumbrous forms of German courtesy, to the Rittmeister (Captain) of the 4th Squadron of the 6th Regiment of Light Horse, at Nuremberg. One of the shoemakers, not knowing this officer's address, good-naturedly offered to show the lad to the guard-house at the nearest city gate, where it might be learned.

They set out accordingly, the stranger hobbling along like one tired out ; his shoes were seen to be covered with dust as from a long journey. Here already begins a difference of opinion as to what he said on the way ; but it is certain that his conductor could hardly understand him, while he appeared not to understand the questions that were put to him. As yet he passed only for an unusually stupid country lout. If his conductor had guessed what a noise this bumpkin was soon to make in the world, he would have surely paid more attention to their attempts at conversation. At the guard-house he showed himself equally stupid ; but the letter spoke for him ; and one of the officials on duty directed him, by signs rather than words, to the house of the Rittmeister Wessenig, who lived close by.

The Rittmeister was away from home, and his servants and children were not a little puzzled what to make of this visitor. He seemed unable to explain what he wanted or whence he came ; and in answer to all questions, groaned out an almost unintelligible sentence, which he repeated again and again. Seeing him to be very tired, they took pity on him and offered him some bread and meat. The meat he rejected with apparent abhorrence, but eat the bread greedily, and drank some water. The family, supposing they had to do with a kind of savage, showed him into the stable to rest, where he manifested great joy at the sight of the horses, seeming to find himself much more at home with them than with his fellow-men. He lay down on the straw and fell fast asleep.

On the Rittmeister's return in the evening with two friends, he heard from his children that there was a wild man in the stable. Going to examine this strange person, they had some difficulty in waking him ; but when at last, by jogging, shaking, thumping, and pulling, he was got on his feet, he laughed like a child to see the officer's fine uniform, and caught hold of his sword. Then, as if remembering himself, he took off his hat, and repeated his gibberish, a kind of broken German,



NUREMBERG.

which one authority gives thus : "*Reuta wähn, wie mei Votta wahn is,*" by which he was understood to say : "I want to be a trooper, like my father." One of those present made the remark that he was too short for a trooper, and must go into the infantry ; to which he came out with something to this effect : "No ; not infantry. I would be a horseman." Beyond this his vocabulary seemed to consist of hardly more than the phrase, "Don't know."

The letter he brought with him was not more satisfactory. It was written in what appeared to be a disguised hand, with blunders of style and spelling, probably designed to make it pass for the work of some ignorant peasant, peculiarities which cannot well be reproduced in the following translation :

"From the Bavarian frontier : the place is nameless, 1828.

"HIGH, WELL-BORN HERR RITTMEISTER !

"I send you a boy who wishes faithfully to serve his King. This boy was left with me on the 7th day of October, 1812 ; and I am myself a poor day-labourer. I have also ten children, and have enough to do to maintain my own family ; and his mother left him with me for the sake of having him brought up ; but I have never been able to discover who his mother is, nor have I ever informed the provincial court that the child was left with me. I thought I ought to receive him as my son. I have given him a Christian education ; and since 1812 I have never suffered him to take a single step out of my house, so that no one knows where he was brought up, and he himself does not know the name of my house, and the place knows he also not. You may ask him, but he cannot tell you. I have already taught him to read and write ; he writes my hand, writing as I write. And when we asked him what he would be, he said he would be a light horseman, as his father was. Had he had parents such as he had not, he would have become a learned lad. If you show him anything, he learns it immediately.

"I have only shown him the way to Neumark, where he was to go to you himself. I told him that when he had become a soldier, I would come to take him home, or I would lose my life.

"Good Mr. Captain, you need not try him ; he does not

know the place where I am ; I took him out in the middle of the night, and he does not know the way home again. I am your obedient servant. I do not make my name known, for I might be punished.

"He has not a kreutzer of money on him, because I have none myself. If you do not keep him, you may kill him, or hang him up in the chimney."

Along with this was enclosed another note, written in Latin, not in German characters, but apparently by the same hand.

"The child is already baptized. He is called Kaspar. You must give him a surname yourself. You must bring up the child. His father was a light horseman. When he is seventeen years old send him to Nuremberg to the sixth regiment of light horse ; there his father also was. I ask for his education until he is seventeen years old. He was born the 30th of April, 1812. I am a poor girl ; I cannot support him ; his father is dead."

Unable to make anything out of this queer business, the Rittmeister sent the youth off to the police-office. Here he showed no uneasiness, as most country lads would have done in such a place, but to all questions replied with his parrot-like jargon, implying that he wanted to be a trooper. Even the threat of a sound cudgelling could bring nothing further from him but "Don't know." The police officials might well be astonished at their singular customer, that could not or would not say who he was and where he came from. After a time one of them thought of trying him with a pen and a piece of paper ; whereupon, to their great amazement, he at once wrote down his name plainly enough, "*Kaspar Hauser*."

As no more could be got out from him for the meanwhile, and as he appeared to be worn out by fatigue, he was taken to a tower used for the confinement of vagabonds. Hardly able to move his limbs, it seemed, he had no sooner reached this place than he sank down upon a bed of straw, and fell fast asleep.

But sleep had no effect in dispelling his stupidity. Next morning he appeared as little able to give an account of himself, and not much was to be learned from a close examination of his person and belongings. He looked like a short sturdy lad of between sixteen and seventeen, with a good-natured,

heavy expression, and the first down of a beard showing on his chin. His hands were small and finely formed, the soles of his feet soft and covered over with blisters, as if unaccustomed to walking; he complained much of pain in them as well as in his hips. He had been vaccinated on both arms, and on the right one showed a sore still marked by a fresh scab. His clothes were coarse, ill-made, and well-worn; the jacket and breeches seemed to be garments of a better class made down; he had a handkerchief marked with his initials, "K. H." The contents of his pockets were a key, a paper of gold sand, a small horn rosary, such as is used by pious Catholics, and a number of printed prayer-books and other little religious publications.

The news of this remarkable new-comer spread through Nuremberg, and in the course of the day plenty of visitors presented themselves at the prison to have a sight of him. They found a not ill-looking youth, who had to all appearance the behaviour and the intellect of an infant. "He seemed to hear without understanding, to see without perceiving, and to move his feet without knowing how to use them for the purpose of walking. His language consisted mostly of tears, moans, and unintelligible sounds, or of the words which he frequently repeated, '*Reuta wähn*,' etc." By this phrase, it presently appeared, he meant to express all the ideas which his mind was capable of conceiving. Every kind of food or drink except bread and water made him ill; he turned pale and nearly fell on putting his lips to a glass of brandy which was presented to him. Feigned cuts and thrusts were made at him with a sword, but he is stated to have stood blankly still without winking, as if unable to imagine that this could hurt him. He put his fingers into the flame of a lighted candle; he tried to look behind a mirror to find his own image reflected in it. He plucked with childish curiosity at the watch-chains or coloured dresses of his visitors. Could he be a savage or an idiot? Warm-hearted people at once took up the notion that he had been ill-used in some most strange fashion, and with ready sympathy hastened to find out all sorts of good qualities in his vacant expression and infantile manners.

After a few days he was conducted round the city by two policemen, to see if he could recognise the gate at which he had entered. But he could recognise nothing, and seemed to

take little notice of any object not brought closely under his attention. Human beings he saluted as *Bua!* and to every animal, whether beast or bird, he gave the name of *Ross*—horse. His constant repetition of this word struck one of the policemen, who brought him a wooden horse such as children play with. Kaspar received it with the utmost demonstrations of joy, and at once sitting down on the floor, began to stroke and pat it, and hang upon it all the coins, ribbons, and pictures that had been given him by friendly visitors. Henceforth he spent hours playing with it, giving no attention to the people around.

The interest in him spread fast, and he had plenty of horses and other playthings offered him by his curious admirers. Nuremberg is, we know, the headquarters of toymaking; so his room was soon littered by hundreds of lead soldiers, wooden animals, and other pretty things which every morning, on getting up, he made a business of setting out orderly in rows. He became one of the sights of Nuremberg; visitors arrived from all the neighbourhood to see Kaspar playing with his horses. Here is a description of his way of life; written, it must be remembered, by a friendly hand and partly upon hearsay:

"These horses were henceforward, when he was at home, his constant companions and playmates, which he never suffered to be removed from his side, of which he never lost sight, and with which—as could be observed through a concealed opening made in the door—he continually employed himself. Every day, every hour resembled the other in this, that all of them were passed by Kaspar sitting on the floor by the side of his horses, with his legs stretched out before him, and continually employed in ornamenting them one way or another with ribbons and strings, or with bits of coloured paper; sometimes bedecking them with coins, bells, and spangles, and sometimes appearing to be immersed in thinking how this decoration might be varied by successively placing these articles in different positions. He also often dragged his horses backwards and forwards by his side, without changing his place or altering his position; yet this was done silently and very carefully, for fear, as he afterwards said, that the rolling of the wheels might make a noise, and he be beaten for it. He never ate his bread without first holding every morsel of it to the mouth of some one of his horses; nor did he ever drink water without first

dipping their mouths in it, which he afterwards carefully wiped off. One of the horses was of plaster of Paris, and its mouth was consequently very soon softened. He could not conceive how this happened, as he perceived that the mouths of his other horses, although they also were immersed in water, remained unaltered. The prison-keeper, to whom with tears in his eyes he showed the misfortune that had befallen his plaster horse, comforted him by insinuating that 'this horse did not like to drink water.' In consequence of this information he ceased to water it, as he believed that the horse, by the visible deformity of his mouth, indicated his dislike to water. The prison-keeper, who saw what pains Kaspar took to feed his horses with his bread, endeavoured to make him understand that these horses could not eat. But Kaspar thought he had sufficiently refuted him by pointing to the crumbs which stuck to their mouths. One of his horses had a bridle in its mouth, which was wide open; hence he also made a bridle of gold spangles joined together for his other horse; and he took great pains to induce it to open its mouth and to let him place the bridle in it; an attempt in which he persisted for two whole days with unwearied perseverance. Having once fallen asleep on a rocking-horse, he fell down and squeezed his finger, upon which he complained that the horse had bitten him. As he was once dragging one of his horses over the floor, its hind feet having got into a hole, it reared up. At this occurrence he expressed the most lively satisfaction; he afterwards frequently repeated a spectacle which appeared to him so very remarkable, and he treated all his visitors with a sight of it. When the prison-keeper afterwards expressed his displeasure at his always showing the same thing to everybody, he ceased indeed to do so, but he cried at his being no longer permitted to show his rearing horse. Once when in rearing the horse fell down, he ran to it with precipitate tenderness, and expressed his sorrow that it had hurt itself. But he was quite inconsolable when the prison-keeper once drove a nail into one of his horses."

Drawings and pictures also caused him apparent pleasure; he would stick such as were given him to the wall of his room, and before long took to imitating them in a clumsy fashion. Writing was another of his amusements. But pieces of money he seemed to regard with indifference, judging of various coins

by their brightness rather than their value, like one ignorant of the use of such things.

After three or four days Kaspar had ceased to be treated as a prisoner, and was lodged in the house of the jailer, who did his best to teach him the usages of civilized life, of which he showed himself as innocent as a South Sea Islander. He played with this good man's children, and through intercourse with them and with his multitude of visitors seemed rapidly to extend his vocabulary and ability to express himself. He spoke of himself and others like a child, in the third person—"Kaspar very well," and so forth; and the people who came to see him were duly amused by his disconnected ungrammatical remarks and ludicrous blunders quite in the style of a child. Thus he is said to have called a fat-bellied gentleman, "the man with the great mountain," and to have spoken of "the lady with the beautiful tail," because he once saw the end of her shawl dragging on the floor.

The Burgomaster of Nuremberg, Herr Binder, took a special interest in the mysterious foundling, and set himself rather prematurely to the task of elucidating his history. Frequently he had Kaspar brought to his house, where he tried to make the lad feel at home, and questioned him at his ease without the embarrassing formalities of a legal examination, which, however, would have been more satisfactory in view of what was to follow. The result of this catechising was that what with leading questions, guesses, hints, and Kaspar's broken talk, Herr Binder, in the short space of six weeks, succeeded, or believed himself to have succeeded, in drawing out of the youth a story which only heightened the mystery of his case—such a story certainly as never was told before with only six weeks' practice in human speech. Assuming honesty on all sides, it may well be doubted how far this tale can be regarded as trustworthy, since the obscure recollections of the hero must necessarily have been confused with the ideas suggested to him by his interrogators, and by the want of full comprehension on either side; but such as it was, he stuck to it in all main particulars, when he had gained the power of expressing himself more fully, and no direct evidence was ever forthcoming to contradict it. Officially given to the public on the 7th of July, 1828, it ran to this effect:

"He knows neither who he is nor where his home is. It

was only at Nuremberg that he *came into the world*. Here he first learnt that, besides himself and 'the man with whom he had always been,' there existed other men and other creatures. As long as he can recollect, he had always lived in a hole (a small, low apartment, which he sometimes calls a cage), where he had always sat upon the ground, with bare feet, and clothed only with a shirt and a pair of breeches. In his apartment he never heard a sound, whether produced by a man, by an animal, or by anything else. He never saw the heavens, nor did there ever appear a brightening (daylight) such as at Nuremberg. He never perceived any difference between day and night, and much less did he ever get a sight of the beautiful sights in the heavens. Whenever he awoke from sleep he found a loaf of bread and a pitcher of water by him. Sometimes this water had a bad taste; whenever this was the case he could no longer keep his eyes open, but was compelled to fall asleep;* and when he afterwards awoke he found that he had a clean shirt on, and that his nails had been cut. He never saw the face of the man who brought him his meat and drink. In his hole he had two wooden horses and several ribbons. With these horses he had always amused himself as long as he was awake; and his only occupation was to make them run by his side, and to fix or tie the ribbons about them in different positions.

"Thus one day had passed as the other; but he had never felt the want of anything, had never been sick, and, once only excepted, had never felt the sensation of pain. Upon the whole, he had been much happier there than in the world, where he was obliged to suffer so much. How long he had continued to live in this situation he knew not; for he had had no knowledge of time. He knew not when or how he came thither; nor had he any recollection of ever having been in a different situation, or in any other than in that place. 'The man with whom he had always been' never did him any harm. Yet one day, shortly before he was taken away, when he had been running his horse too hard, and had made too much noise, the man came and struck him upon his arm with a stick or with a piece of wood; this caused the wound which he brought with him to Nuremberg.

* This was explained by the supposition of opium being put into the water.

"Pretty nearly about the same time the man once came into his prison, and placed a small table over his feet, and spread something white upon it, which he now knows to have been paper; he then came behind him, so as not to be seen by him, took hold of his hand, and moved it backwards and forwards on the paper, with a thing (a lead pencil) which he had stuck between his fingers. He (Hauser) was then ignorant of what it was; but he was mightily pleased when he saw the black figures which began to appear upon the white paper. When he felt that his hand was free, and the man was gone from him, he was so much pleased with this new discovery that he could never grow tired of drawing these figures repeatedly upon the paper. This occupation made him almost neglect his horses, although he did not know what those characters signified. The man repeated his visits in the same manner several times.

"Another time the man came again, he lifted him from the place where he lay, placed him on his feet, and endeavoured to teach him to stand. This he repeated several different times. The manner in which he effected this was the following: he seized him firmly around the breast from behind, placed his feet behind Kaspar's feet, and lifted them, as in stepping forward.

"Finally, the man appeared once again, placed Kaspar's hands over his shoulders, tied them fast, and thus carried him on his back out of the prison. He was carried up (or down) a hill. He knows not how he felt; all became night, and he was laid upon his back. (This 'becoming night,' as appeared on many different occasions at Nuremberg, signified, in Kaspar's language, 'to faint away.')

The account given of the continuation of his journey was principally confined to the following particulars: "That he had often lain with his face to the ground, in which cases it became night; that he had several times eaten bread and drunk water; that 'the man with whom he had always been' had often taken pains to teach him to walk, which always gave him great pain. This man never spoke to him excepting that he continually repeated the words, '*Reuta wahn*,' etc. He, Kaspar, never saw the face of the man either on this journey or ever before in prison. Whenever he led him he directed him to look down upon the ground at his feet,—an injunction which he always strictly obeyed, partly from fear, and partly because

his attention was sufficiently occupied with his own person and the position of his feet. Not long before he was observed at Nuremberg, the man had put the clothes upon him which he then wore.

"The putting on of his boots gave him great pain ; for the man made him sit on the ground, seized him from behind, drew his feet up, and thus forced them into the boots. They then proceeded onwards still more miserably than before. He neither then, nor ever before, perceived anything of the objects around him ; he neither observed nor saw them ; and therefore he could not tell from what part of the country, in what direction, or by which way he came. All that he was conscious of was that the man who had been leading him put the letter which he had brought with him into his hand, and then vanished ; after which a citizen observed him and took him to the guard-room at the New Gate."

This tale called forth amazement, horror, and indignation. If it were true, a most shameful and wicked crime had indeed been committed in the very heart of civilized Germany. The interest of the Nuremberg people rose to the point of excitement, and soon began to spread all over Europe. Learned jurists spoke loudly in denunciation of the crime of "soul-murder" which had been committed upon this unfortunate youth ; philosophers were eager to prove their theories upon this rare specimen of human nature with a mind that must be as good as virgin soil ; while the general public were lost in conjectures as to the motives that had thus been at work to rob a fellow-creature of the brightest and most momentous part of his life. Kaspar Hauser became a celebrated public character, on the strength of an account of himself which, by his own showing, he was most unfitted to give.

From the first, indeed, there were more critical heads that pooh-poohed his story, and proclaimed him either a lunatic or an impostor. Reasons were not wanting to support such doubts. If Kaspar now groped and tottered like an infant learning to walk, asked the unbelievers, how was it that on his first appearance he had been seen standing on his legs, and had contrived to get along without assistance, tired and footsore as he evidently was, to the guard-house at the gate, thence to the Rittmeister's house, thence to the police-office, in all more than seventeen hundred paces? Now he was by way of learning to speak for

the first time, but the citizens whom he had accosted in the streets on his arrival, declared him to have uttered one or two sentences more or less intelligible and to the purpose. If so ignorant of the manners of men, why had he according to German custom taken off his hat to the corporal of the guard, and again on addressing the Rittmeister? He pretended that the light hurt his eyes after constant confinement in a dark room, but could he have learned to write in the dark?

These and other suspicious circumstances commended themselves, or the reverse, to men's minds, so that the whole city was soon divided into warm advocates or opponents of its strange guest and his strange story. His partizans, however, had the weight of public feeling on their side, the ladies being specially willing to be convinced of Kaspar's claims to sympathy; and the city of Nuremberg formally adopted him as its foster son till the dark enigma of his birth should be cleared up.

So numerous and troublesome did Kaspar's visitors now become, that his new manner of life seemed to produce a degree of excitability threatening serious illness. He complained often of headache and other painful sensations; he lost his appetite; he even professed a desire to go back to his quiet cage, and to "the man with whom he had always been." He could hardly be brought to see the injury this man had done him. "Man not bad, man me no bad done," he would say on hearing angry comments on the conduct of the unknown. His friends wisely judged that the publicity in which he lived, and the constant intercourse with all sorts of curious strangers, was not the best way of promoting the orderly development of his unpractised faculties, exposed here to a crowd of disordered, scattered and confusing impressions. He was therefore placed under the sole care of Professor Daumer, a young teacher who had early taken a keen interest in him, and entered with enthusiasm into the task of training this neglected mind, justly stipulating that he should have the subject of his experiments all to himself. It is not often that an ardent educationalist gets such a chance of working upon an almost blank sheet, so to speak.

Kaspar, being boarded in Professor Daumer's house, and treated with great kindness by him and his family, a mother and sister, by order of the magistrates no strangers were henceforth to be allowed to visit him, and a notice to this effect was published in the newspapers. In the end, however, it proved

impossible altogether to restrain the public curiosity. It was on the 18th of July that our hero entered his new home, where he enjoyed for the first time, as he declared, the luxury of a proper bed, and soon began to show signs of rapid improvement in health, wisdom and stature.

In the meanwhile, the police were of course making efforts to discover his alleged place of confinement, and to lay hands on the man represented as having treated him so ill. But these efforts were in vain. Kaspar gave no help towards identifying the locality; and to know that it could not be very far off, only made the riddle more perplexing. It seemed certain that no ordinary criminal could be at the bottom of this business. The unknown had represented himself as a mere day-labourer, but under the style of rustic simplicity affected by his letter were visible certain marks of its being the work of a man well educated and not ignorant of the world. The very name *Hauser* (literally *homer*), looked like a punning allusion to the manner in which the youth was said to have been shut up, and suggested the mysterious tyrant as grimly laughing in his sleeve at all attempts to discover him. The Romanist tracts gave a hint at his religion, which may have been intended as a false scent, but anyhow was of little help, since the greater part of Bavaria is inhabited by Catholics. Certain good Protestants of course did not fail to see here the work of these arch evil-doers, the priests, but the police could find no evidence to bear out this suspicion.

From time to time the legal researches were renewed with fresh vigour; accused persons were taken up with a readiness that was the prerogative of most Continental governments in that day; suspected houses were searched, but neither house nor person could be found that might fit in with the story. The police of foreign countries have usually more power than in ours, but there are also disadvantages in keeping the machinery of government out of the open air of public opinion. People began to whisper that the authorities had had instructions not to look too closely into this affair, for fear of disclosing some state secret; and the glimmer of this suspicion helped to magnify Kaspar Hauser into a personage of mysterious consequence, while the mystery remained more of a mystery than ever.

II.

ACCORDING to Kaspar Hauser's account, all his life had hitherto been passed in a state which was little better than sleep ; and his mind remained in an unformed condition, presenting phenomena intensely interesting to students of human nature. Those whose duty it now was to watch closely over him, saw nothing in his behaviour or abilities to contradict this story. They may have been prejudiced by their zeal in the cause of this young wonder of theirs ; but they were no doubt honest enough in their observations. Let it be remembered, however, that we are going to look at our hero as seen through the eyes of avowed friends and patrons.

In the first place he is represented as being very docile and affectionate to those in charge of him, a feature of character which helps to explain their good-will towards him, and also quite fell in with the helplessness of his apparent childhood. He cried and laughed almost as readily as a child, expressed his likes and dislikes much in the same way, and, with a beard already sprouting on his chin, showed tastes such as commonly belong to the cradle. In other respects his constitution rather suggested an idiot. He would often be overcome by deep sleep hardly to be distinguished from a swoon ; sometimes, when he was puzzled and amazed, his face and limbs became agitated by convulsive spasms ; then he might fall into a kind of trance, and stand like a statue, apparently unconscious of all around him. His body presented no evident defect, but a physician who examined his limbs, was of opinion that they bore traces of the crippling attitude in which he was said to have spent nearly all his life. Other doctors, however, did not agree on this point.

His notions of the external world, as we have seen, were most vague and faint. Colours affected him strongly ; he preferred bright red and the glittering of gold, but showed a positive aversion to green and black. On having his attention called to a beautiful summer landscape, he turned away with horror, exclaiming, "Ugly ! ugly !" and professed to find relief in fixing his eyes on the white wall of his room. When his education was more advanced, he explained that looking out of a window had appeared to him as if a shutter were placed before his eyes,

on which a painter had spattered the contents of his different brushes filled with white, blue, green, yellow, and red paint all mingled together. We have this, as well as the following anecdote, on the authority of Herr von Feuerbach.

"I spoke to him, among other things, of the impending winter, and I told him that the roofs of the houses, and the streets of the city, would then be all white—as white as the walls of his chamber. He said that this would be very pretty; but he plainly insinuated that he should not believe it before he had seen it. The next winter, when the first snow fell, he expressed great joy that the streets, the roofs, and the trees had now been so well painted; and he went quickly down into the yard to fetch some of the white paint; but he soon ran to his preceptor with all his fingers stretched out, crying and blubbering, and bawling out, 'that the white paint had bit his hand.'"

He was also understood to be deficient in the sense of perspective, having to feel with his hands to make sure whether a thing were round or angular. Like a savage, he recognised no difference between an object and a painted representation of it; he wondered why the horses, unicorns, ostriches, and other animals which he saw carved or painted upon houses and sign-posts, did not try to run away. He attributed life to senseless things, such as a statue in the garden of Professor Daumer's house, which excited his displeasure because it was so dirty, and yet did not wash itself—this after he had himself learned the lesson of cleanliness, a matter at first of great indifference to him. If he saw a sheet of paper blown away by the wind, or a child's waggon rolling down hill, he thought them moved by their own will just as he might have been. The balls in a ninepin-alley he spoke of as hurting one another, and stopping because they were tired; and it was only on finding his humming-top would not go when his own arm grew sore with winding it, that he began to suspect himself of having anything to do with the motion. There was the same difficulty in distinguishing between the properties of men and of animals. He tried to teach a cat to take food with its paws, and expressed great indignation that it would not attend to his instructions. Manifestations of force and life were all alike to him; when a tree rustled, it seemed to speak, yet he believed that somebody had made it and stuck it in the ground, leaves and all. All this, of course, is according to the hypothesis of his veracity.

On the other hand, his senses are described as singularly acute. It was a long time before he could be accustomed to eat like other people ; the least taste of meat, or beer, or milk, made him very ill ; and he had to be slowly weaned upon water gruel from his diet of bread-and-water. Two or three drops of wine, and even fresh grapes, produced on him marked symptoms of drunkenness. He had wonderful keenness of sight ; the Daumers observed that he could see at night like a cat, and were astonished by the facility with which he distinguished the numbers of berries on a cluster, of stars in a constellation, of windows in a distant house. His hearing appeared to be equally fine. He took pleasure in musical sounds, but the first time that a big regimental drum was beaten near him, it had the effect of throwing him into convulsions. The most delicate and the most troublesome of his senses was that of smell. Almost everything had its own peculiar smell for him, and almost all smells he found more or less disagreeable. The scent of roses or violets was to him an unsupportable stench ; his nerves were painfully affected by odours quite imperceptible to other people. He could hardly bear to pass a garden or a tobacco-field, and coming near a churchyard sent him once into a fit of ague. He turned his face away, shuddering, from a chimney-sweeper a few paces off. The opening of a bottle of champagne drove him from the table or made him sick ; so did the smell of an old cheese. Yet it was an odd fact that he showed no great aversion to smells such as most people find unpleasant.

Then he exhibited curious sensibilities of the kind that have often seemed to link human nature here and there to an occult world. Contact with a magnet, we are told, the sight of a rattlesnake, the passage of a thunderstorm, a visit to a somnambulist, the full moon, all affected him with strong symptoms of physical agitation. There are marvellous stories of his distinguishing one metal from another without seeing them, simply by their attractive influence on his nerves ; of his feeling "a drawing in his whole body" when he went into an ironmonger's shop ; of his detecting a needle under an oil-cloth when no one else could feel it. The veins of his hand, testifies Daumer, were visibly swollen when exposed to this kind of metallic excitation. It may here be remarked that the worthy professor was a follower of homœopathy, mesmerism, and other bye-

paths of physical science, who may therefore be understood to have a temptation to exaggerating and insisting upon these minute susceptibilities.

As might be expected from his history, Kaspar had no knowledge of religion, and it was a matter of great difficulty to explain to him the principles of Christianity, a difficulty said to be increased by the fact that while still in the custody of the police, four clergymen had set upon him all at once with such a strong dose of metaphysical doctrine, as left him quite bewildered and disgusted for a long time afterwards. But he was not without moral instincts. The first thing he came to read intelligently was the story of Joseph, upon which he remarked that Joseph had treated his brethren with great harshness in playing on their feelings; in his place, Kaspar would have frankly forgiven them at once and let them go, keeping only Reuben, who had saved his life. He could not bear to see inhumanity to animals—he would not kill even the fleas that troubled him in the police prison! He was angry with a boy for beating a tree with a stick; he cried when he saw a child whipped; and he earnestly begged Professor Daumer to reprieve a fowl condemned to the spit. The sight of the crucifixes in the churches caused him great pain; he entreated that the man who was being so grievously tormented might be taken down, nor was it easy to persuade him that this was an image which could not feel. According to Von Feuerbach and Daumer, this supposed savage was not long in both conceiving and expressing sentiments of no small delicacy.

“It was in the month of August, 1829, when, on a fine summer evening, his instructor showed him the starry heavens. His astonishment and transport surpassed all description. He could not be satiated with the sight, and was ever returning to gaze upon it; at the same time accurately fixing with his eye the different groups that were pointed out to him, remarking the stars most distinguished for their brightness, and observing the differences of their respective colour. ‘That,’ he exclaimed, ‘is, indeed, the most beautiful sight that I have ever yet seen in the world. But who has placed all these numerous beautiful candles there? Who lights them? Who puts them out?’ When he was told that, like the sun, with which he was already acquainted, they always continue to give light, he asked again, ‘Who placed them there above, that they may always

continue to give light?' At length, standing motionless, with his head bowed down, and his eyes staring, he fell into a train of deep and serious meditation.

"When he again recovered his recollection, his transport had been succeeded by deep sadness. He sank trembling upon a chair, and asked why the wicked man had kept him always locked up, and had never shown him any of these beautiful things? He (Kaspar) had never done any harm. He then broke out into a fit of crying, which lasted for a long time, and which could with difficulty be soothed, and said that 'the man with whom he had always been' might now also be locked up for a few days, that he might learn to know how hard it is to be treated so. Before seeing this beautiful celestial display, Kaspar had never shown anything like indignation against that man, and much less had he ever been willing to hear that he ought to be punished. Only weariness and slumber were able to quiet his sensations; and he did not fall asleep—a thing that had never happened to him before—until it was about eleven o'clock.

"Indeed, it was in Mr. Daumer's family that he began more and more to reflect upon his unhappy fate, and to become painfully sensible of what had been withheld and taken from him. It was only there that the idea of family, of relationship, of friendship, of those human ties that bind parents and children, brothers and sisters, to each other, were brought home to his feelings; it was only there that the names 'mother,' 'sister,' and 'brother,' were rendered intelligible to him, when he saw how mother, sister, brother, were reciprocally united to each other by mutual affection, and by mutual endeavours to make each other happy. He would often ask for an explanation of what is meant by 'mother,' by 'brother,' and by 'sister,' and endeavours were made to satisfy him by appropriate answers. Soon after he was found sitting in his chair, apparently immersed in deep meditations. When he was asked what was now again the matter with him, he replied with tears, 'he had been thinking about what was the reason why *he* had not a mother, a brother, and a sister, for it was so very pretty a thing to have them.'"

The reader must always bear in mind that he has been hearing the case from one side only, since it is impossible to tell such a story from both points of view at once. Unbe-

lievers in Kaspar's account of himself put down his peculiarities to wonderfully clever acting, helped out by the favouring credulity of those about him; the believers ask, with reason, how he could have acted his part so faithfully as to fall into agues and convulsions at a moment's notice? The latter are not so happy in explaining the wonderfully rapid progress which this vacant mind seems to have made in speaking, reading, and writing. At first his memory proved surprisingly excellent, though this faculty soon grew impaired—as soon as he had learned all which he knew already, sneered the doubters! In a few weeks he was able to converse with more or less ease; in a few months he was already trying his hand at literary composition. He learned easily to swim, to draw, to dance, to play chess. From wooden horses set upon real ones, he became almost at once a skilful and bold rider. He was quick in picking up so much knowledge of character, that he guessed the disposition of people towards him, and showed no small adroitness in flattering and coaxing them, or in drawing into his shell when that seemed the safest line of action. It is confessed that he did not take to people who asked him too many questions. His enemies called this artfulness by such names as slyness and cunning; his friends found it quite natural, and excused it from the necessity of standing on his guard, which was forced upon him by his circumstances.

By-and-by, even his friends had to admit that their *protégé* showed some faults. He told fibs. He was wilful, vain, and flighty. He soon became idle after the first burst of industrious application to study. It was the fashion in Nuremberg to believe in him: he was especially a pet of the ladies, so all the care of his true well-wishers could not prevent him from being frequently taken out into the best society of the town, the amusements of which he found more to his taste than lessons; and these interruptions caused by his notoriety as a public character went far to make him unsteady and develop his weaknesses.

Nevertheless, his education must have gone on apace. In the spring of 1829, he wrote a lengthy autobiography of himself, being an extension of the former narrative drawn up by Herr Binder, and was pleased with the idea of having it published—a great advance to have made in less than a year; already, some months earlier, he had tried his hand at com-

position on this subject. He even made a rough attempt at writing poetry. Also, he began to dream remarkable dreams ; in one of which he declared himself to have seen a fine palace, a nobleman wearing a star, and a great lady who called herself his mother. This dream came quite *à propos* to confirm many of his partizans, who, all along, had made sure that he must be the son of some exalted personage. Before the year was out, a startling incident afforded these mystery-mongers what they took for clear proof of the justness of their opinion.

Kaspar was in the habit of going out every day between eleven and twelve to take a lesson in arithmetic. On Saturday, the 17th October, he told Professor Daumer that eating part of a walnut had made him ill, and obtained permission to stay at home. Nothing was seen of him till twelve o'clock, when, as he did not come to dinner, Daumer's mother and sister began to feel uneasy, and set about a search through the rambling old premises, which stood in an open and little frequented part of the city. The sister, in cleaning the house, had already found marks of blood on the staircase, which led her to think Kaspar's nose had been bleeding ; more blood was also noticed in the courtyard, but without suggesting anything serious. Now, looking about, Mrs. Daumer saw blood on the door of the cellar, and on descending into it, was frightened by the look of something white lying in a dry corner. She hurried back for assistance ; then the alarmed household ran down to find Kaspar, pale, senseless, his clothes in disorder, and his face covered with blood. They raised him and carried him to bed, where, on partly coming to himself, he began to rave in broken exclamations about a man, a black man, a man like a sweep.

Clearly, something had happened to startle a quiet family. On examination, Kaspar's injury proved to be confined to a sharp wound on the forehead, in itself not very dangerous ; but he seemed to have received a shock to his system which gave rise to serious apprehensions. He remained for two days in a state of delirium, sometimes seized by a fit, in which several strong men were scarcely able to hold him down, sometimes raving in an incoherent way, with such repeated phrases as, "The man kill me—away ! Don't kill—I all men love ; do no one anything. Burgermaster's lady, help !—Man, I love you too ; don't kill ! Why the man kill ? I have done you nothing ! Don't kill me ! I will yet beg that you may not be locked up.

Never have let me out of my prison, you would even kill me ! You should first have kill me before I even understood what it is to live."

On the third day he was better, and able to give some account of what had happened. Having gone to one of the outbuildings in the courtyard, he said, he had encountered a man whose face was covered by a black veil or mask. This man had suddenly struck him down with a blow of some weapon, then disappeared as mysteriously as he had come. When Kaspar found the blood running down his face, he hastened up to his room. But as if out of his senses with bewilderment and terror, instead of seeking help, he had gone back into the courtyard, and hid himself in the cellar. The floor of this was almost covered with water, the cold wading through which partly restored his consciousness, and when, sitting down in a dry spot, he heard the clock strike twelve, he began to reflect ; "Here I am lost ; no one will look for me here." This miserable thought so agitated him, that he swooned away, and knew nothing more till he found himself on his bed.

By this affair the city was stirred into fresh excitement over its enigmatical guest. Nothing was now wanting to confirm his partisans in their view of his case. The unknown gaoler of his youth had hoped to get rid of him as a private soldier or taken charge of by some charitable institution. But instead of disappearing in obscurity, he had become a public character : his cause had been adopted by influential persons, all Germany was inquiring into his birth. He was said to be about to publish a story of his life, which would attract still greater attention. The secret was in danger of discovery ; he must be killed to save the reputations of certain great persons whose names might be only whispered as yet. There need be no doubt about his account of the assassin. Had not a well-dressed gentleman been seen washing his hands at a street water-trough not far from Daumer's house, about the very time of the attack ? Who could this other gentleman be, that a few days later came to the city gate asking earnestly about Kaspar's health ? Nay, had not the preternaturally gifted lad himself, before the event, expressed a foreboding sense that some attempt was to be made on his life ?

But there were others, who found the evidence deficient, and appealed to reason against the story that seemed to their fellow

citizens so probable. If the unknown wanted to make away with Kaspar Hauser, they argued, why had he not done so while the youth was still in his power? Why attempt his life in a place so open to discovery? Anyone concerned in such secrets would not be likely to manage his business so clumsily. A black-veiled man, walking into a house full of people in broad daylight, on the chance of being able to stab one of the inmates, then deliberately washing the blood from his hands in the public streets, made a very theatrical figure, but hardly answered to the artful criminal who had so long baffled all the researches of the Bavarian police. And if he had run such risks to kill Kaspar, why did he not kill him outright, while he was about it? Was it not more likely that the wound had been given by Kaspar's own hand? He had heard many people talking of him as a wronged heir: what better way could he take of proving his title to such a character? Perhaps he was tired of living at Daumer's, under the constant watch of his too zealous friends. Finding his representation grow stale, might he not have resolved to inflict a slight wound on himself, and then tell this amazing story about it, as a means of reviving the flagging interest in his fortunes.

Such, anyhow, proved the immediate result. Hauser's cause was henceforth more warmly taken up by the city of Nuremberg as well as by private persons. A policeman was appointed to guard him wherever he went. The King of Bavaria offered a reward of five hundred florins for the detection of his assailant. This brought out plenty of informers, and several families were made uncomfortable by denunciations tending to connect them with the crime; but all the efforts of the police still failed to discover any real traces of the supposed murderer; so Kaspar's partisans had to fall back on their theory that the persons concerned were above the reach of justice.

All over Germany people were now speculating as to his birth, and suspiciously scanning the records of princely houses to find an inheritance for him. No acknowledged prince could be made so much of. He became the chief attraction of Nuremberg. Nobles, scholars, and travellers turned out of their way to pay court to him; and his pocket-book grew rich in the autographs of distinguished personages. His safety was carefully provided for by the authorities. He himself practised with a pistol, and went armed in case of another attack.

Before long, Daumer's being thought too exposed, he was removed first to the house of one of the magistrates, and then to that of Herr von Tucher, in a more thickly inhabited part of the city. Boarded there at the public expense, he was sent to school, always with a guard to protect him, and began to learn Latin and so on, like other boys. He was never allowed to go out alone. His masters found him diligent and attentive enough, but sly, forward, and not very well behaved. One would like to know what his schoolfellows thought of him !

For two years thus his life went quietly on, amid all sorts of conjectures and researches as to its origin. Some said he was a son of Napoleon. Some were inclined to fix him upon the ducal house of Baden. At one time great sensation was caused by a wild story told by a certain disreputable priest who professed to find his birthplace in Hungary. Though this story did not bear the test of legal examination, there were many who long clung to the idea of Kaspar's being the son of some Hungarian magnate. He professed to recognise certain Hungarian and Polish words, which, he said, recalled to him his mother and his nurse ; but such experiments were not very satisfactory, as, after a little, they generally brought on a headache and other signs of agitation. Then his aptitude for riding seemed to his friends to point to Hungary, since the Hungarians were a nation of horsemen. Much more likely, said his enemies, that he is a young English dragoon who has deserted from his regiment, and hit upon this plan of befooling the good people of Nuremberg.

At this point our hero becomes connected with a patron, and with a critic. The Hungarian clue was followed up at the instigation and expense of no less a person than Earl Stanhope, father of the celebrated historian, who had taken a lively interest in Kaspar ever since the mysterious attempt on his life. In the summer of 1831 he was sent on a journey to Hungary under the care of his tutor, Herr von Tucher, and of Lieutenant Hickel, of the Bavarian police, who now for the first time appears by name upon the scene, but throughout played no small part in it, for he was one of the officials charged with inquiring into the case.

A shrewd man, and from the habit of his duties given to close observation and suspicion, this officer was no sooner brought into the close daily intercourse of travel with Hauser

than he began to take note of certain things which had escaped the friendly eyes of other guardians. Thus, those fits of trance or profound slumber into which the strange youth was always falling, and from which rubbing, tickling and shaking could hardly rouse him, struck Hickel as a very convenient way for Kaspar to hear what was said and thought about him, since, while he was in this state, people were in the way of talking as freely before him as if he were not present. At all events, Hickel observed that he could keep wide awake as anyone while he pleased, and never showed himself overpowered by slumber when anything to eat was on the *tapis*. With his preternaturally acute senses, he made a great to-do about the effect which a homœopathic dilution of camphor had upon him, but on another occasion did not detect the presence of some pieces of camphor which were lying about the room without his knowing it, and which the noses of his companions had at once recognised. Pepper was poison to him, he declared; but only when he had been told there was pepper in the dish, Hickel ascertained. He pretended great abhorrence of venturing over water, yet sometimes forgot this peculiarity till reminded that he was on a bridge. On the whole, he appeared to enjoy the tour vastly, and was all the more thrown off his guard so as to expose the deceitfulness and affectation of his conduct to the vigilant companion who kept watching him more sharply than he knew. Here again, however, let us not forget the class of prejudices likely to bias a police-officer.

After all, the journey proved mere lost labour. At Presburg the travellers found people in panic before the dreaded approach of the cholera, and had to return home without prosecuting their inquiries. But now Hungary too had been stirred into no small curiosity about this son whom men would fain father on her. A Hungarian magnate, with part of his household, came to Nuremberg to see Hauser. On the news of their arrival, his usual guard of one policeman was increased to two, in case another attempt at murder should be on foot; and the strangers had much difficulty in getting permission to visit him. The results of their interview were such, that for a moment the mystery appeared on the point of being cleared up. The sound of a few Hungarian words threw Kaspar into a state of violent emotion, as if he had at last found the key to unlock his long closed memory. The name *Stephen* was mentioned, and he at

once claimed it as his own. In the same way he professed to recognise the name of a certain noble family and their castle, with which scandal had connected him. "That is my mother!" he cried. But when the strangers had gone, these names soon slipped from his memory, which remained as blank as before.

Kaspar Hauser being so long in coming to his "rights," whatever they might be, Nuremberg, while duly jealous of her living curiosity, showed a disposition to apprentice him to some handicraft whereby in the meantime he might get his living; for amusement he had tried book-binding, which seemed to suit him. There had been also some talk among his sympathizers of an international subscription to maintain him as the "son of all Europe," since no more definite parentage could be found for him. But now, in the end of 1831, Lord Stanhope, true to the continental idea of an openhanded *milord*, came forward to save Europe and Nuremberg any further expense in the matter. He announced his intention of adopting Kaspar and providing for his future.

The first result of this change in our hero's prospects was his removal to Anspach, where he lived with Lord Stanhope for a time, and was treated by him with the utmost consideration and affection. On the earl's departure for England, he left his *protégé* under the charge and tuition of Herr Meyer, Lieutenant Hickel being appointed his legal guardian. He had plenty of pocket-money, a horse to ride, and everything he could reasonably wish for. As soon as his education should be more advanced, it was Lord Stanhope's intention to have him brought to London, unless a home had previously been found for him in one of those princely palaces to which his partisans made so many suspicious allusions. In short, the interesting orphan was now in clover.

And at this period of his history, his vanity might well be satisfied by the publication of a book all about himself. This book, from which the foregoing quotations have been made, was the work of one of his chief patrons, Herr von Feuerbach, a distinguished Bavarian judge. The judicial qualities of the author are, however, not very evident here, for he adopts Kaspar's account of himself enthusiastically, shuts his eyes to all other evidence, and glorifies the virtues of his hero as heartily as he denounces the ill-nature of those who refused to

believe in him. The very title, "*A Crime against the Soul Life of Man*," is a begging of the whole question at issue. Besides, he leaves the famous foundling at the very zenith of his fortunes, and still wrapped in all the clouds of mystery. It is this one-sided and unconcluded narrative that, circulating somewhat widely in Europe and America, has given a very inadequate idea of Kaspar's case, so that in more than one reputable work his story is brought forward as if the truth of it might be taken for granted.

III.

KASPAR HAUSER, when he came to live at Anspach, must have been about twenty years of age, and was by this time to all appearance much like other people. The preternatural acuteness claimed for his senses had apparently worn away. He still indeed showed himself given to hysterical crying and pouting in a childish fashion, and from time to time was caught affecting some singularity, as if to make people remember that they must look on him as an extraordinary person, which they were by this time rather apt to forget. He could now eat almost everything with relish, and though he professed still not to take wine or beer, his favourite dish was a pudding with wine sauce. He frequently dined out in some of the chief houses of the place, where he played an excellent knife and fork. As for his education, there was left no trace of the wonderful ability shown at the outset; he had to be turned back by his new instructor to the very rudiments of knowledge.

Lord Stanhope, so long as he remained in Anspach, had treated him with quite paternal kindness, and their leave-taking was a most pathetic scene of tears and embraces. Kaspar, it was noticed, dried his eyes very soon; but at the first night's halt, his noble patron sent him a letter full of affectionate solicitude. Other letters followed, holding out bright hopes of a speedy summons to London. Here is the style in which this peer of Great Britain wrote to our foundling: "My dearest Kaspar . . . I miss thee, my beloved foster-son, every day and almost every hour; and never do I see anything new, beautiful or interesting, without earnestly wishing that thou wert with me. Never do I enjoy anything without regretting that thou dost not share it with me." It is no wonder if Kaspar's head were a little turned by such signs of intimacy, especially when

some of his foolish friends began already to give him the title of "lord," for want of that princedom or other inheritance which as yet remained in the clouds.

The earl, however, had not been altogether blind to his *protégé's* faults, and had felt pained by a certain want of confidence in him, which seemed a bad return for his beneficence. For instance, understanding that the youth kept a journal, he expressed a natural curiosity to see it ; but to his astonishment and displeasure Kaspar chose to make a mysterious secret of this book ; he would only show the outside of it ; the earl might read it later on, but not now. Inclined at first to judge Kaspar indulgently, Lord Stanhope entertained the suspicion that the Unknown might have bound his victim by a fearful oath, which kept him from revealing some features in his past ; but the idea of dissimulation did not fail to rankle in the peer's mind, and there soon appeared a marked change in his sentiments towards this son adopted with such rash generosity.

Early in 1832, Lieutenant Hickel took a second journey to Hungary, to investigate the story which connected our dubious hero with a certain locality there. There is no reason for us to enter into this story, based apparently upon nothing but malicious or foolish slander. Hickel's account is somewhat reticent about these inquiries ; but the gist of his report was as above, and he not only showed the extreme improbability of an aristocratic foundling being sent all the way to Nuremberg from Hungary to be got rid of, considering the little austere manners of that country and the power of its nobles, not much amenable to law and police, but he plainly pointed out how Master Kaspar must have been fibbing. He had, for instance, pretended to remember that at the supposed home of his childhood he played with ears of Indian corn, as he might have seen children doing in Bavaria. Now Hickel ascertained that no Indian corn grew in that neighbourhood, the name of which is only indicated by an initial.

The effect of such a report was to awaken in Lord Stanhope's mind fresh doubts as to Kaspar's credibility. He had already seen cause for trying to impress upon his *protégé* an English horror of lying ; and after these proofs of deceit his altered tone showed a serious loss of favour. Through Hickel, he insisted on having Kaspar's journal without further shuffling. But it was in vain that Hickel and the tutor Meyer pointed out

to the youth what right his benefactor had to be satisfied in such a demand. Kaspar got angry, refused to give up the book, and on Hickel's taking a tone of demand, declared that he had burned it. Other bad accounts of him increased the displeasure caused by this display of wilfulness and ingratitude. His education did not get on. His teachers found him spoiled by the trifling and petting of Anspach society. So the journey to London was put off, and there were no more of Lord Stanhope's affectionate letters.

His guardians felt not less disgusted with his behaviour; even the fondly-admiring Von Feuerbach saw cause of complaint, and began to suspect that people would accuse him of writing a romance in his old age. Kaspar's fortunes were clearly on the wane. Yet, watched closely by critical eyes, and in danger of being deserted by his patrons, he seems to have shown a carelessness not to be expected in an impostor, along with proofs of self-will hitherto foreign to his supposed character. He began to fret against not being allowed to walk alone, which is the less surprising when we hear that for want of a policeman or other male attendant, this young man, with his beard growing, was sometimes sent out in charge of a maid, and would try to run away from her like a naughty child. Within certain limits he was now allowed to go about the town by himself. His legal custodian, Hickel, did not approve of the removal of this restriction, and the event justified the prudent police-officer's apprehensions. Hickel declares that by the end of 1832 he wanted to give up the charge of such a troublesome ward altogether, and had disclaimed any responsibility for him.

All this time the hints, suspicions, and inquiries of curious persons who still took an interest in probing the mystery of Kaspar's birth had not failed to keep the ducal house of Baden and other families in a state of uneasiness, without bringing to light any definite evidence. In the beginning of 1833, another origin was reported to have been found for him in Coburg-Gotha. A lady there fancied he might be her long-lost son, and showed much emotion at the sight of his portrait and a lock of his hair which were duly sent for her inspection. So then Kaspar himself was brought to Gotha by Hickel, who this time took care to keep him in the dark as to what might be expected of him, the result of which proved that no suitable

reminiscences of his childhood were forthcoming, while the lady, on meeting him, found she had been mistaken ; and this journey, like the others, turned out a wild-goose chase.

The hope of going to London seemed at an end. For a long time Lord Stanhope had not written to Kaspar ; and when he did resume his correspondence with the youth's guardians, it was to express suspicions and urge inquiries. They saw well to consider seriously the necessity of teaching him some business by which he might earn his livelihood. There had been a talk of apprenticing him to watchmaking, for which he showed some taste, but the weakness of his eyes was made an objection ; and Kaspar had grown so fond of fine clothes and fine company, that he kicked against the notion of becoming a mere tradesman. Then he thought he would like to be a law-writer, and Von Feuerbach had him set to act as a copying-clerk in the courts ; but he soon grew tired of this occupation, and spoiled more stamped paper than his pocket-money would pay for. At this time, as was required of candidates for an official appointment, he went through the ceremony of confirmation in the Lutheran Church, after a due course of religious instruction by a clergyman. A great crowd came to see him make this public profession of his faith, and his friends the ladies were much edified by the emotion which he showed at the altar.

Soon afterwards occurred the death of his best friend, Herr von Feuerbach. Kaspar's situation would now have been a pitiable one, if Lord Stanhope had not renewed his communications with Hickel, taking a different tone, indeed, but speaking of the lad as an object of pity, though unworthy of trust, and repeating his interest in and desire to provide for him somehow. He wished Kaspar to learn some occupation, yet at his own choice, and not a mere handicraft. For the meanwhile the earl's desire was that his education should be pushed on ; more lessons and less amusements were recommended, not at all to our hero's satisfaction, though he did not fail to boast among his acquaintances of these renewed marks of noble favour. Before long came news that Lord Stanhope would soon be in Germany, and meant to visit Anspach with the view of seeing for himself what was best to be done.

The story is now drawing towards the end of 1833. Late in the summer one more gleam lit up Kaspar's failing fortunes.

There was a grand national fête at Nuremberg, graced by the presence of the Bavarian Court, to which, among other distinguished guests, came our hero, at the queen's special desire, on a visit to his old friend Herr Binder, was presented to the royal family, took part in all the festivities, and found himself in his glory again as an object of general attention and curiosity. All precautions for his safety seemed now to be thought unnecessary; he mingled freely in the holiday-making crowds, and laughed at the idea of anybody wanting to harm him.

From these dissipations he returned to Anspach, to enter upon the sober course of greater application to lessons and less intercourse with frivolous society, enjoined upon him by his patron. Lord Stanhope's arrival was now expected from week to week, and Kaspar showed some anxiety as to their meeting. The earl was to be accompanied by his wife and daughter, who were understood by no means to have shared his sympathetic interest in the foundling—in fact, to look upon him as a downright impostor. Kaspar appeared to Hickel troubled at the prospect of being taxed with his duplicity, especially as his tutor, Meyer, was threatening to report to the earl fresh instances of untruthfulness. Perhaps Lord Stanhope was not less ill at ease as to how he should meet this adopted son, of whom he had taken leave with such affectionate emotion; no man, especially no Englishman, still more no milord, likes the notion that he has been made a fool of. Instead of making straight for Anspach, he went first to Vienna, and when at last he set out upon the long promised visit, it was to learn from a newspaper, on the way, the catastrophe of this tragedy—for a tragedy it turned out, after all.

It is Kaspar's own statement, that on the morning of the 14th December a man dressed in a smock-frock, like a rustic, accosted him at the Law-Court buildings, and asked our hero to make an appointment to meet him that afternoon in the Court Garden. The same man, he declared, had a day or two before proposed such a meeting to him, but he did not go, while keeping the matter secret from the Meyer family. This time, though the Court Garden lay beyond the bounds in which he was allowed to walk alone, he proceeded to the rendezvous, heedless of the snowy and stormy weather, after telling a lie as to where he was going. At a part of the garden marked by the monument of a local poet named Uz, he met a man who at

once came to business by holding out to him a small violet-coloured bag, and at the same moment stabbing him in the side.

Herr Meyer was sitting quietly at home, when his pupil burst into the room with agitated gesticulations, pointing first to his wounded side, then out into the street. Without a word he hurried forth again, beckoning Meyer to follow, which he did for some distance without getting any answer to his anxious questions. The youth still wildly replied with signs, and was for hastening on towards the palace ; but at last, being stopped by force, gasped out a few words which did not make his tutor much the wiser. Meyer now insisted upon helping him home, and on the way he exclaimed, in broken sentences : " Man with moustache—had great knife—monument of Uz—stabbed—give bag—run as fast as could—bag lie there." It was high time that he should be looked after, for on reaching the house he swooned away.

No time was lost in fetching medical men and giving notice to the police of what had occurred. A policeman hastened to the Court Garden, where, near the monument of Uz, he found in a thicket the purse, or little bag, spoken of by Kaspar, inside of which was the following note in pencil, written backwards, so as to be read in a mirror :

" Hauser will be quite well able to tell you what I look like, and whence I am. Then to spare Hauser the trouble, will I myself tell you whence I come. I come from —, the Bavarian frontier on the river ; I will so far tell you the name.

" M. L. Ö."

Meyer's first impression was that the wound had been self-inflicted. " This time you have played your stupidest trick !" he exclaimed, when Kaspar came to his senses ; whereupon the latter called heaven to witness that it was not so. And the first thing he said on seeing Lieutenant Hickel, who had been away from home, was, " I did not do it myself !" which statement Hickel inclined to take for a case of *qui s'excuse s'accuse*. After all they had seen of him, his guardians were not now so ready to believe in the melodramatic mystery in which so many scenes of his life had appeared to be involved.

At first the wound was not considered mortal, but after the

course of two or three days there was a change for the worse. On the evening of the 17th his condition became serious. The clergyman who had prepared him for confirmation, being now brought to his bedside, asked him if he was at peace, but could draw from him no confession of guilt or uneasiness. He spoke as one strengthened by all the consolations of religion. To the question whether he forgave his enemies, he returned the remarkable answer: "Why should I have any anger or grudge? No one has done me any harm!" It was also noticed that he made no inquiry as to the contents of the bag, though he had been anxious to know if it were found.

After this his wits were evidently wandering at times, so that it is not fair to bring against him what he may have said in the last hour of his life. But, amid expressions of warm gratitude to his friends and guardians, it struck Hickel, at least, that there was something on his mind which he fain would have spoken out. When hardly able to speak longer, he seems to have expressed a desire to write with a pencil; but at such a moment the clergyman thought it more important to turn his thoughts to prayer. "Tired, tired; a great journey to make!" were his last intelligible words. He died as the clock struck ten.

Three days later he was buried, in the presence of an immense concourse of people. All the sympathy with this half-forgotten foundling of Nuremberg was revived by his unhappy fate; and again he became throughout Germany the main topic of conversation and argument, while round about Anspach the police were once more at their wits' end in seeking any trace of the mysterious murderer. Opinions were still divided; some believed that he would never be found, for the best of reasons. As on the previous attempt, these doubters asked why he had not taken care to kill his victim outright while he was about it, instead of letting him run away to give an alarm? and why had he chosen for the deed such a public place as the monument of Uz, near which many people might be expected to be passing, that day and hour, on their way home from market? On the fresh snow no footsteps but Kaspar's own had been found leading away from the spot. Was it usual or natural for a murderer to leave behind him a note explaining, in a spirit of mockery, what he had done? This note afforded an important piece of circumstantial evidence. It was folded in a peculiar way practised by Kaspar. In spite of the disguised manner in

which it was written, Meyer believed that he could identify as his pupil's certain points in the writing, the spelling, and the style; the repeated phrase, "I will tell you," occurs over and over again in his autobiography. For some weeks before, he had been in the habit of shutting himself up in his room, where he might have been practising this way of writing backwards. It is also stated that the bag had been recognised as having belonged to Kaspar.

The wound was externally a slight one, which he might have given himself with such a knife as is used in bookbinding, one of his pursuits. The physicians who made the post-mortem examination differed in opinion as to whether this stab appeared to have been self-inflicted or not; what they agreed on was astonishment that after such an injury the victim could have run home a distance of nearly a thousand paces, then have retained strength to go out with Meyer and retrace nearly half that distance and back. All this part of his conduct was inexplicable. Why had he not sought help in the nearest house at once? There were slight contradictions in the story as he told it to various persons; and those who knew him best were least disposed, this time, to put faith in it. On the other hand, a large portion of the public, carried away by the sentimental features of the case, were persuaded that the youth had met his death by a crime recalling the good old days of secret societies and State murders; and, in the eyes of such persons, this catastrophe gave the strongest confirmation to the character claimed for him as an important and much-wronged personage.

As soon as Lord Stanhope received the news, he hastened in great agitation to Munich, where he saw the king and the minister of the interior, and got them to set a special inquiry on foot. His interference, indeed, was hardly needed to stir up the authorities in a matter of such public notoriety. But the reward of ten thousand florins, offered for the discovery of the crime, was never gained. The end of Kaspar's career remained as much a mystery as the beginning.

Before long he figured as the hero of a novel; and, indeed, his story was well adapted for the purposes of fiction. About the same time another book was published by Lord Stanhope, giving reasons for looking on his former *protégé* as an impostor. Great as must have been the mortification, this kind-hearted nobleman thought right to confess honestly, upon considera-

tion, that he had been too credulous. But all Kaspar's partisans were not so unfaithful to their cause, nor so ready to admit that they had been deceived. A violent controversy was waged over his grave, and is not yet settled, though it may perhaps be taken that the weight of literary and critical opinion is against his pretensions, while the common people, as in our Tichborne case, are more inclined to believe that, if the foundling had his rights, he might now be occupying the throne of one of the German states, or some other high position.*

This controversy has recently been revived in Germany. The latest contribution to it is a posthumous work of Lieutenant Hickel's, whose official position had prevented him from publishing the book in his life-time. He, as we have seen, had every opportunity for learning the facts of the case, while he was intimately acquainted with Hauser in the latter part of his life. The opinion of such a man is therefore most valuable, and it is much as follows.

Kaspar Hauser must have been the son, probably illegitimate, of somebody who, without being any great personage, found it convenient to get rid of him, and thought to do so by sending him to Nuremberg, where it was expected he would be enlisted in the cavalry and not many questions asked. He had, perhaps, been brought up very privately in some out-of-the-way part of Bavaria ; but the story of the dungeon, and of his never having seen human beings or the light of day, must be taken as a mere invention. He arrived at Nuremberg tired and bewildered, as we have seen, and at first acted rationally enough, according to the instructions that had been given him, though awkward and shy, of course, among these new scenes and persons. His refusing all food but bread and water was only natural, on the supposition that he had been poorly brought up and was quite unused, like many other German peasants, to the taste of meat. Finding himself the object of attention and

* A cheap publication of the style so common in German literature, a slight improvement upon our old *chap books*, undertakes to handle the mystery with great boldness. It makes Kaspar the son of Napoleon by a Polish countess, whose affections the usurper has won by promising to secure the independence of her country. A discarded lover of hers in revenge steals her child, after a violent scene with the mother, who goes mad. The lover acts much like a madman himself, educating the child in solitude, as described in Kaspar's story, and finally murdering him because the mother has recovered her wits.

sympathy, no doubt as unfamiliar to him as high living, he may, half unconsciously, have been led into playing the part of an object of pity. But while presenting or affecting the character of a neglected being, he had plenty of mother-wit, which helped him to take advantage of the friendly wonder with which he saw himself surrounded. People spoke about him in his presence as freely as if he had been a beast or an infant; and from their guesses he was not slow to take his cue, shaping his conduct to answer the ideas formed of him. Thus, whereas at first he was shown to have spoken of himself as "I," and to other people in the usual way, by-and-by he called himself "Kaspar," using the third person as a child does when learning to speak. Moreover, the whole evidence of his conduct at this early period of his appearance in the world, becomes vitiated through the looseness, not to say partiality, with which it was taken and recorded.

Encouraged by the success of the deception, he might well have grown more and more artful, while his easily-deceived friends, led on also by their own theories, gave him every aid he could desire in passing for an extraordinary individual. Their curiosity came half-way to meet his cunning. His story was mainly invented for him by Herr Binder, who, believing himself to be drawing out the young prodigy, was only supplying hints for his imagination. Then Daumer's love of the marvellous at once guided and tempted Kaspar to further trickery. He learned to tickle the peculiarities and flatter the opinion of those who favoured him, and to stand cautiously on his guard against others. One weapon was the headache, so apt to come on if he were hard-pressed with questions; another the trance or deep sleep which fell upon him so conveniently when there was anything to be heard which he might turn to advantage. His hysterical and excitable constitution came in very handy; but the extreme acuteness of his senses meant mainly a want of acuteness on the part of Professor Daumer. The love of notoriety, growing by what it fed on, stimulated him to feign most of the marvellous powers which figure so largely in Von Feuerbach's book. His vanity was excited by the interest taken in him, and the claims of high descent put forth for him. Seeing this interest flag, he had the bold thought of a mysterious attempt at assassination, which at once sent his credit up with the public. His head naturally

began to be turned by all this notoriety, and by the affection of a rich nobleman like Lord Stanhope. In the Hungarian matter he overreached himself, becoming now so careless and wilful as to excite the suspicions of the less enthusiastic guardians who succeeded Daumer. Even Daumer, before having done with Kaspar, had been fain to confess that lying was become a second nature to him.

All the conjectures about him proving mere mare's-nests, he found his fortunes again on the ebb. He was kept hard at lessons; he got out of favour with Lord Stanhope; he was urged to learn a trade. He foresaw danger. A police-official named Merker had just published a book, written in a very different spirit from that of Von Feuerbach, and throwing cold water on the foundling's romantic pretensions. A visit from his offended patron was announced, and his disgusted tutor had a bad report to make of him. So Kaspar, remembering what a happy effect had been produced by the former attempt on his life, determined to try this trick again.* He inflicted another wound on himself, without intending to go the length of suicide. But this time he fatally overdid his part. The suddenness with which mortal symptoms came on had possibly prevented him from making any confession, as his better nature might have urged him to do, when he knew that the game was up. In short, he had from the first been more knave than fool, till successful knavery grew into folly, and, in Meyer's words, he at last played his stupidest trick.

Such is what seems to be the best guess at the truth of this strange story; yet it must be admitted that much may be said on the other side. According to Hickel's view of it, Kaspar's character appears full of contradictions, quite inexplicable if we did not perceive how curiously in human nature a certain hysterical weakness is often found united with no small degree of cunning. Leaving out of the question Daumer's marvellous report of his natural powers, we see that this youth, who went into fits like a lunatic, and cried like a child on such small provocation, showed a tact, a self-possession, and an ability to turn things to his own advantage, which bespoke no ordinary

* These seem not to have been the only events of the kind. He told a lady that he had been shot at while out riding. Another time he shot himself accidentally, while handling a pistol, inflicting an inconsiderable wound. Might he have been rehearsing a different form of assassination?

cleverness, while his talents become still more striking if the story about his early life be even partly true. The advocates of this story dwell upon the strong point that its falsehood could not be put beyond doubt by the discovery of who he really was. Perhaps it will never be settled for certain whether we must look upon him as an artful and audacious schemer, or as the truly pitiable victim of an extraordinary crime ; perhaps, as Lord Stanhope suspected, he may have been a little of both. In any case, he remains a most mysterious boy.





A BLIND BOY.

QF all the calamities to which human nature is subject, blindness might be judged the saddest and the most disabling. No sense seems more precious to us who have it, than the gift of sight ; the loss of that we dread as hopeless, helpless misery. And yet, as a matter-of-fact, not only are blind persons frequently found enjoying a singular measure of good spirits, but many of them have admirably succeeded in cultivating and exercising faculties which might appear wholly beyond the reach of those thus

“ From the cheerful ways of men
Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair
Presented with a universal blank
Of nature's works to me expunged and rased,
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.”

Of blind poets, the example of Milton, perhaps of Homer, makes it needless to speak. Music, too, may be called almost a special gift of the blind, one sense apparently gaining by the want of another. Aided by the delicacy of touch which blindness also develops, blind mechanics have often distinguished themselves in handicrafts requiring no small dexterity. There have been blind scholars, mathematicians, teachers, philosophers, physicians, sculptors, statesmen ; even blind soldiers are known in history. What shall we say of one blind man riding a race, of another being a good judge of horses, of a third setting out

to make a voyage round the world ! James Wilson's "Biography of the Blind," deals with some fifty such unfortunates whose careers have yet been noteworthy, celebrated, or, in their case, nothing less than wonderful. And not the least remarkable is the early life of the author himself, who had too good cause to be interested in the history of blindness.

James Wilson was the son of a Scotchman who had married and settled in Virginia. The boy's birth took place during the height of the revolutionary contest, in which his father had joined the royalist side ; and, in his infancy, their home was desolated by the horrors of civil war. The mother and child had to fly by night from a band of infuriated partisans, who attacked and burned Mr. Wilson's house ; he himself lost his property, his health, and his liberty while fighting for what seemed to him the right cause. Set free at the close of the war, it was but natural that he should return to the old country.

When they had embarked for Liverpool, the ill-fortune of this family still attended them. The voyage was long and stormy. Before many days were over, first the father died, then the mother with an unborn child. Poor little James, now about four years old, saw them both sewn up in the same hammock and committed to the waves. Scarcely had his eyes done him this sad service, than he was seized by the small-pox, and, for the want of proper care and medical aid, as he thinks, lost his sight.

He was believed to have small chance of life when the disabled vessel put into Belfast. There it seemed best to send the sick child on shore. He remembers how a good-hearted sailor, who had been his nurse since his mother's death, kept him on his knee in the boat, and, with rough kindness, administered to him rum and water, the tar's best notion of a universal panacea ! The rest of the crew had been kind as they could. The captain deposited with the parish authorities enough money to support James for five years. Thus was he left, blind and sickly, among strangers.

Fortunately he fell into good hands, though he blames the churchwarden of Belfast for not taking the trouble to learn more about him, so as in time to make good such claims as he might have had to compensation from government on account of his father's losses. The nurse in whose care he was placed

had a warm Irish heart, and proved a second mother to him. In the course of a few months, his health unexpectedly improving, he could grope about the house alone. Soon afterwards, a surgeon, his namesake, couched one of his eyes with such success that he could once more distinguish forms and colours. This glimpse of the new world was a joyful recollection to him all his life, but it did not last long. One day, when about seven years old, he was attacked in the street by an angry cow, and so injured as to lose his sight once more, nearly losing his life as well. Thus hitherto had misfortune upon misfortune been the lot of this orphan.

For the rest of his life he remained blind ; but from this time on we find him making the best of his calamity. Henceforth he enjoyed good health and good spirits. "I could laugh and joke with the most of people." There was no sitting in the chimney-corner, brooding over his fate ; he was active on his legs as in his thoughts ! As a boy he seems to have been by no means shut out from the company and amusements of other boys ; he is even seen taking the lead among them in a pastime very characteristic of the period, and he learned to use his fingers all the more deftly for the want of his eyes.

"When I was about eight or nine years of age, I was not only projector, but workman, for all the children in the neighbourhood. I amused myself occasionally in constructing little windmills, cars, and ships. A kind friend made me a present of a little ship, a perfect model of the *Royal George*, which was lost at Spithead, and this toy was esteemed by me as one of the most precious gifts I could possibly receive. Having made myself perfectly acquainted with its structure, I thought of making one myself, upon the same principle. I procured a piece of wood, and with no other tools than an old knife, a chisel, and a hammer, completed (not, however, without the loss of some blood,) my first attempt at ship-building. This pleased my juvenile companions so well, that I had every day numerous applications for ships. They procured me the wood, and my ambition was not a little augmented, when I found that I was applied to by boys considerably my seniors, and possessing many advantages of which I never had to boast ; before I resigned this trade, I completed my fourteenth ship.

"There was in the neighbourhood a piece of water, about

one hundred feet in circumference, appropriated to the accommodation of some flocks of ducks and geese. In the evening we were accustomed to dispossess these hereditary occupiers of their native element, and form our fleet into two divisions; the English were to be distinguished by red and blue streamers—the French, by white. Two boys, with their breeches rolled up to their knees, were generally employed to direct the movements of each squadron, he on the right being distinguished by the name of Admiral, and the boy on the left by that of Commodore. The plan of attack was, that each ship should be so far from her companions, as to preserve the regular sailing distance, and at the commencement of the action, the English vessels were so placed as always to have the weather-gauge of the enemy. Each English ship formed a triangle with her two French opponents, and so, when the wind blew, she passed between them, and this was called breaking the line. It was the duty of the Admiral and Commodore of each fleet, at this alarming juncture, to restore order, and form the lines anew. The English were drawn up in the same position which they occupied at the commencement of the action; the French were placed about two feet in advance, with their sterns towards the English, and the wind, filling the sails of both equally, caused the French to fly and the English to pursue. At this moment the shout of triumph was raised, and the joyful cry of Victory! Victory! Victory! burst forth from the infant multitude who were witnesses of our naval exploit."

But soon James had other things than play to think of; the old woman who had taken such good care of him died, and he was left alone in the world. How did he set about making his living? Of all ways, by carrying letters and messages about the town! The blind boy can boast that, for such commissions, he was employed in preference to those who had the use of their senses, so well known were his diligence and punctuality. He has often been sent thirty or forty miles with important business communications. The town and neighbourhood of Belfast were quite familiar to him; and he says he has tramped through an unknown part of the country at the rate of thirty miles a day.

He has one story to tell, over which he may well chuckle complacently. One dark night he fell in with a soldier, just

arrived in Belfast, who had left his wife, his musket, and all, at a lodging-house, and then forgotten the address. A question or two gave James a good guess as to the house this man had been wandering about in search of for two or three hours. Going on in front, that his infirmity might not be discovered, he told the soldier to follow him, and led the way over the stepping-stones of a foul ditch they had to cross, so carefully that his companion complimented him on having better eyes than himself, at which James laughed in his sleeve. Thus they reached the lodging-house, which proved to be the very one wanted. Then what was the soldier's amazement on being told by his landlady that he had been guided home by a blind lad !

At one period of his youth, James turned pedlar, and took long journeys through the country. Here he confesses himself to have been at great disadvantage from his blindness. He might be wet through by a storm, when standing ignorantly within a few paces of shelter. All his sagacity could not prevent him at times from straying into fields and byeways ; then often he had to stand a good part of the day, waiting for the sound of a passing foot or a human voice, that he might be directed back into the right road. In his blindness he did not go always straight, and was liable to step into ruts or puddles, or to stumble against some obstacle ; and more than once a friendly warning came just in time to save him from running into more serious danger. A blind person, he tells us, always inclines to the hand in which he holds his stick ; which has a natural tendency to lead him wrong, even if he knows how he should go.

Before this, he had tried the so common resource of blind persons, playing the fiddle, and got so far as to officiate at merry-makings with a few tunes which he had learned to scrape by ear. But, for want of proper teaching, he did not make much progress in this art, and as he had no liking for the bad company and loose habits into which it led him, he soon gave it up.

James Wilson was destined to be something better than a strolling fiddler. He found more congenial employment in delivering the Belfast *News Letter* to subscribers. His wages were only two shillings a week, with half a dozen copies of the paper, which he lent out on his own account at a half-penny an hour, collecting and distributing them from house to house

among his private customers, "an agreeable exercise," as he calls it. News was in demand then, for this boyhood, like others of those treated in the present volume, was passed in the stirring times of the French revolution, when Ireland, too, had sore troubles of her own. Young James took a keen interest in politics, and made himself quite an authority upon the contents of the papers he sold. He had an excellent memory, which supplied, in some degree, the place of his eyes. He knew the names, stations, and admirals of almost all the ships in the navy, and the number, facings, and local connection of every regiment of the army. Once, to satisfy a gentleman who had made a wager on it, he repeated the names of no less than six hundred and twenty British ships of war; and he served as a complete army and navy list to his poorer neighbours, who often could not read themselves to learn the fate of their friends and relatives fighting England's battles in every part of the world.

Another service he could do for his younger acquaintances, was in writing them epigrams, love-songs, letters, acrostics, and what not, in praise of their sweethearts! While a mere lad, he had already commented poet; and if the early verses published by him are not worth more than the general run of such juvenile productions, they appear really wonderful when we consider them as composed by an author who could neither read nor write for himself, imprisoned, since childhood, as he says,

"In one continued night
From January's sun till dark December's eve."

It is time, indeed, to ask how one in his sad case ever contrived to set foot on the lowest step of the literary ladder. He could have learned little or nothing at the age when he finally lost his sight. He lived before the day of special education for the blind. The good people with whom he was brought up had no dealings with learning; the companions among whom he would be chiefly thrown were a set of young savages, much handier at stone-throwing than at reading or writing. The best part of his boyhood seems to have passed before he came to pay much attention to books; then he had, of course, to depend on some one reading to him. He got a boy of his own age to perform this office; but, naturally, his first course of reading could not but be "of a very indifferent description, as

I was obliged to listen to what was most convenient." He began, however, in much the usual way with "Jack the Giant-Killer," "Valentine and Orson," "Robinson Crusoe," "Gulliver's Travels," and the like, which filled him with delight, and sharpened his appetite for more. Next, he took to novels and romances, of which he managed to get and go through several hundred volumes in the course of some three years, coming to know as much about Tom Jones and Sir Charles Grandison as any idle library-subscriber of the day.

In after life he had no good opinion of fiction as an intellectual diet; but he grew up to manhood without much reading beyond novels, newspapers, and poetry. When he was about twenty-four years old, and already celebrated locally as a poet, a fortunate circumstance gave a new turn to his literary tastes. He joined a sort of mutual improvement society of Belfast mechanics, among whom he made acquaintance with a man whom he does not name, while praising him as the most extraordinary character he had ever known. "To good nature, he united an original genius, good taste, and great sensibility; and, had an early education been his lot, or had his mind been sufficiently expanded by study, he would have become an ornament to society; but he was totally devoid of ambition, and never had a wish to rise above the rank of a humble mechanic."

This man and James Wilson soon found themselves to be kindred spirits, just suited to each other; and an arrangement was made between them that the one should supply books for the other to read aloud. The time fixed for this occupation was from nine o'clock till one of winter nights, and from seven to eleven in summer; but they were so zealous in their task as to devote to it every leisure hour when they could come together. James's new friend was always ready to spend his breakfast and dinner-hour in the same way, reading aloud between every cup of tea; and the blind man, after tramping all day through the country, would go miles through the cold and wet not to miss that nightly treat, at which he was able to look out upon the world with the eyes of the mind.

For seven or eight years lasted this course of study, as it really was. The two friends did not take so much trouble for the sake of light amusing reading; they tackled seriously to such heavy volumes as were reputed the best literature of their day, Rollin, Plutarch, Clarendon, "Zimmerman on Solitude;"

in fact, they read with avidity every book that they could get in all branches of solid English literature. Now it was that James's remarkable powers of memory stood him in good stead. He carried away from his oral reading more than many eyes get by careless skimming of ten times as many pages, storing in his mind not only a wealth of useful knowledge, but quotations, descriptions, images, and sentiments with which to brighten his lonely hours of darkness. As an example of his capacity for retaining facts, he mentions that he could go through an epitome of the "History of England," with the leading events, dates, reigns, names, and characters of all the great men who flourished in the different ages. With pardonable pride he tells how this minute knowledge seemed such a prodigy to his friends, that they dubbed him the "Living Book," and the "Walking Encyclopædia."

While still young, he made a happy marriage, and children grew up about him who had no cause to be ashamed of their father. In time we find him apparently thriving in modest comfort, visiting different parts of the United Kingdom, making good friends in all classes of life, becoming a useful and respected member of society, and even distinguishing himself by his literary labours. His character seems to have been graced by a true piety, and a spirit of cheerful content. In his own story of the first part of his life, there is hardly a hint of complaint; he speaks as one satisfied with his condition. Yet, ah no! for all the lessons of religion and philosophy, he could not wholly forget the light which had blessed him in earlier years; and there were times when he felt the darkness of his lot, remembering the beauties of nature, now all a blank to him, but once engraven on his mind in lasting characters. Better, perhaps, for such a one never to have seen the sun, than to have seen and lost!—or rather, is the memory sweeter than the regret is bitter?

"In sleep I frequently return to the scenes of my childhood. Then is presented to my imagination all those rural objects in their pristine freshness and beauty: the daisy-enamelled field, the primrose banks, and the hawthorn in full blossom, and that sweet little stream, in whose limpid waters I have so often paddled, with the companions of my infant days. A few weeks ago, I had a dream, when I thought I was in the neighbourhood where I was brought up. The sun beamed

forth in unclouded splendour. Methought I saw the wind gently shake the trees, and turn up the white side of the leaf, on the road before me. I fancied that I saw people abroad, taking the air, and their clothes fluttering in the breeze. On the opposite side of the river, was a beautiful range of green sloping hills, variegated with corn-fields, groves and white-washed houses. I forgot in my sleep that I was old and blind. I ran, leaped, and shouted with joy; when, to my great disappointment, I awoke, and all this fair scene was lost."

James Wilson is best known through his "Biography of the Blind," a monument of what has been, and can be done by those afflicted like himself. The lesson of this book is the same as that of some of the lives we have been following in their first and most momentous stage; any wide enough range of biography would supply no other moral. We see how, in spite of all disadvantage of birth, means and circumstances, young lives have grown to that which they were born for, drawing nourishment of their true strength from the most barren soil, and often flourishing but the more vigorously for the storms and frosts that have threatened to blight their natural growth. We are not all satisfied with the turn life takes for us, and we should then do well to consider that the fault "is not in our stars, but in ourselves." The best blessings, we may be sure, are those which adverse fortune has the least power to withhold from us if we know and seek them. Fate is not so much any man's master as that he cannot inspire or console himself with these bold words of a great poet-philosopher of our age:

"Laurel crowns cleave to deserts,
And power to him who power exerts.
Hast not thy share? On winged feet,
Lo! it rushes thee to meet;
And all that Nature made thy own,
Floating in air or pent in stone,
Will ride the hills and swim the sea,
And, like thy shadow, follow thee."

THE END.

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his capture; for the latter was handcuffed, and secured below for further punishment the next day. In the morning, the calf and the calves were sent on shore, and, when landed, Cramps was ordered to shoulder the calf and march to the farmer, ~~over~~ and ask his forgiveness; and then to return on board with the conviction that he should receive fifty lashes for his ~~share~~ and the assurance that he should be hung at the yard-arm if he was detected in such an undertaking again. The result of this expedition proved Cramps to be the greater calf of the two. The fifty lashes were remitted at the solicitation of the kind-hearted farmer.

Her repairs being completed, the *Protector* put to sea again, and in three or four weeks steered for home, provisions beginning to run short, and no more prizes coming her way. After sailing in with a British frigate of superior force, to which she thought well to show her heels, she reached Boston safely, where all hands were paid off. But Ebenezer was well enough pleased with his first experience of a man-of-war to be ready to try again.

He found that his father had died during his absence, which was another reason against remaining at home to be a burden on the poor mother with her eight children. So, the *Protector* having been overhauled and re-equipped, he entered on board her for a second cruise. She sailed at the end of October, returning first to her old cruising ground off the Banks of Newfoundland, then making for the West Indies, then trying the southward of the States. She took several prizes, and was once more making for home with the cheering prospect of dividing a good haul of prize-money, when she unluckily caught a Tartar, or rather a couple of them, in the shape of English cruisers, which had been for some weeks on the look-out for this bold depredator on their shipping.

Two large ships were one morning observed, to the leeward, bearing down upon the *Protector*. Two of her prizes which she had in company were ordered to shift for themselves as best they could, while the American man-of-war crowded all sail and tried to make off from the strangers, who, though showing French colours, looked very suspicious from the first. About noon they were evidently gaining upon her fast. The captain called all hands aft and expressed his opinion that these were British men-of-war, and that his ship had little chance of

